Seeking a Sustainable Journey to Work

Findings from the National Bridges to Work Demonstration

Anne Roder and Scott Scrivner

P/PV

A Publication of Public/Private Ventures

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Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of social policies and programs. P/PV designs, tests and studies initiatives that increase supports, skills and opportunities of residents of low-income communities; works with policymakers to see that the lessons and evidence produced are reflected in policy; and provides training, technical assistance and learning opportunities to practitioners based on documented effective practices.

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Over the past 40 years, poverty and unemployment have become increasingly concentrated in central city communities as job opportunities have moved to the suburbs. Poverty rates in central cities are more than double those in suburban areas, and poverty is further concentrated within individual inner-city neighborhoods. Studies of metropolitan labor markets have found that most new entry-level jobs, for which welfare recipients and other low-skill workers qualify, are located in the suburbs (Fisher, Weber 2002). These social and economic trends led many policymakers and researchers to focus on solutions to the mismatch between the location of jobs and the location of unemployed workers. Theories about the factors that limit inner-city job seekers' ability to connect to suburban jobs include a lack of information about these jobs, difficulty accessing transportation, discriminatory hiring practices and urban residents' fear of applying for suburban jobs (Ihlanfeldt, Sjoquist 1998).

The Bridges To Work Demonstration

In the mid- to late-1990s, with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Ford, MacArthur and Rockefeller foundations, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) designed and implemented the Bridges to Work demonstration to test a strategy for helping inner-city job seekers overcome barriers to accessing suburban jobs and thus increase their employment opportunities and earnings. The three primary components of the Bridges to Work model were:

- Job placement assistance to break down the information- and transportation-related barriers faced by poor urban residents searching for jobs in the suburbs;
- Transportation services to facilitate a city-suburban commute; and
- Supportive services that addressed issues that arose as a result of the commute.

To investigate the effectiveness of this strategy, P/PV conducted a random assignment evaluation of Bridges to Work in four metropolitan areas with a significant number of urban poor residents and a strong trend of suburban job growth: Baltimore, Denver, Milwaukee and St. Louis. Over a two-year period from 1997 to 1999, the four sites enrolled a total of 2,360 people: half were randomly assigned to a treatment group and the other half to a control group. Each person in the treatment group was eligible for up to 18 months of Bridges to Work services. People in the control group did not receive Bridges services but could reapply for them after 18 months and could seek services from other agencies or programs. With the random assignment design, differences in outcomes between the treatment and control groups could be attributed to participation in Bridges to Work. P/PV conducted a separate study in Chicago that was not designed to measure program impacts but to understand how large a mobility program could be and how a program must adapt its transportation strategy to serve significantly more participants.

All findings in this report are based on self-reported data obtained from interviews with study participants or from forms completed by program staff. All study participants at the four experimental sites, including treatment and control group members, were interviewed prior to random assignment and were contacted again 18 months later; 77 percent or 1,813 completed the second interview. In Chicago, a sample of 388 participants were contacted for a follow-up interview so that we could compare their outcomes to those of participants at the experimental sites; 67 percent, or 260, completed the interview.

The primary goal of the research was to determine whether increasing access to suburban job opportunities improved the employment and earnings of inner-city job seekers. We expected participation would increase participants' probability of being employed and enable them to obtain better jobs even after leaving the program due to the knowledge they gained about the suburban job market and commute. We also examined whether Bridges to Work decreased receipt of public assistance by increasing earnings. Finally, we investigated the impact of Bridges on participants' decisions about where to reside.

This report explores the impact Bridges to Work had on participants' outcomes and derives lessons learned from the demonstration. In previous reports on the initiative, we examined in greater depth the implementation of the Bridges to Work model.

The Bridges To Work Participants

The Bridges to Work participants were almost evenly divided between men and women; 86 percent were African American. The Bridges programs attempted to recruit inner-city job seekers whom they believed could be placed successfully in jobs in the targeted suburbs. As a result, the Bridges participants as a group appear more job-ready than the larger pool of unemployed residents of high-poverty neighborhoods as a whole. Most (85%) had a high school diploma or GED and had worked at some time during the year prior to application (88%). However, the Bridges participants faced other potential barriers to securing and maintaining employment. Nearly a third (30%) had been convicted of a crime. A third had been homeless at some point in their lives. Only 6 percent had both a valid driver's license and everyday access to a car or truck. Nearly three quarters lived in households with income below the federal poverty line at the time they applied to Bridges to Work.

Implementing Bridges To Work in the Late 1990s Economic Boom

While the Bridges programs employed varying strategies to connect inner-city job seekers to suburban jobs, they all provided the basic elements that were central to the project's design, including assistance obtaining jobs in the targeted suburbs, transportation to those jobs and limited supportive services to facilitate the suburban commute. The programs provided participants with job leads and encouraged them to conduct their own job search, while providing transportation to suburban employers to complete applications and go on job interviews. Transportation services at three of the sites consisted of

14-passenger vans that picked participants up at one or multiple stops in the city and took them to their suburban employers. Two sites relied primarily on large-bus service supplemented at times by smaller vans. Supportive services primarily took the form of a guaranteed ride home from participants' suburban employers in cases of emergency and counseling on issues that arose in participants' new suburban workplaces.

Although the sites were able to offer the basic elements of Bridges to Work, they faced significant challenges recruiting participants, which greatly affected their ability to provide a sustainable journey to work. The Bridges to Work model presumed there would be a large pool of job seekers in the targeted communities who would be ready and willing to go to work in the suburbs if the opportunity were opened to them. However, once program implementation was underway, the sites learned that the pool of available job seekers applying to Bridges was not as prepared to work as expected. Bridges to Work was implemented during the economic boom of the late 1990s, a time of strong job growth and low unemployment. The economic expansion meant increased employment opportunities for the work-ready residents that the programs targeted. In addition to the strong economy, Bridges' novelty and the experimental design likely contributed to job seekers' and potential referral partners' reluctance to rely on the program.

The Bridges sites responded to these challenges by implementing new recruitment strategies and offering limited job preparation and retention services. The programs sought to increase their applicant pool by implementing extensive direct outreach campaigns and expanding the geographic areas from which they attempted to recruit job seekers. They added one to three days of job readiness training, including assistance with writing résumés and interviewing for jobs. They adjusted their job development strategies to target jobs that matched applicants' low skill sets. Finally, the programs followed up with participants after placement more intensely than originally anticipated to offer support and re-placement services.

Across the four experimental sites, the programs placed 64 percent of the individuals randomly assigned to receive Bridges services in jobs in the targeted suburban employer areas. Participants' commutes to their Bridges jobs were lengthy; more than half had one-way commutes that lasted more than 45 minutes. The sites' need to expand the geographic areas from which they recruited applicants meant that some participants had longer-than-anticipated travel to the Bridges pick-up locations. Another consequence was that the programs had to increase the number of pickup points in the city, adding extra time to the commute, particularly for those who were picked up first. The sheer number of employers—and their individual demands—also encumbered the sites' ability to provide a sustainable door-to-door commute. The programs worked with numerous employers to place participants in jobs and had to serve multiple shifts and multiple start times within a shift. The programs did not have the capacity to operate vans or buses to serve each start time or each employer and, therefore, participants were sometimes dropped off or picked up 15 to 30 minutes before or after their shifts, adding to already long days.

Although participants were eligible to receive the Bridges to Work placement and transportation services for 18 months, the majority of them made use of the services for only a short period of time. Data collected from the sites indicate that only 30 percent of participants who obtained a Bridges job continued to work in the targeted suburbs and maintain contact with the program after three months. Staff reported that some

participants faced personal struggles that made it difficult for them to keep their jobs, while others were dissatisfied with certain aspects of the Bridges jobs, including wages that were not significantly greater than what they had earned prior to applying to Bridges. These factors, coupled with the long commute, likely explain why participants did not utilize the Bridges services for long. At the same time, the strong economy meant greater job opportunities were available for the work-ready job seekers the programs were targeting.

The Bridges to Work transportation services were very costly for a single nonprofit agency to provide, and were difficult to sustain. Once the demonstration ended, both Denver and Milwaukee stopped providing transportation services; Chicago terminated its service prior to the demonstration's end. Baltimore continued to provide transportation services for about six months after the demonstration ended before deciding to eliminate the service due to its cost. St. Louis used its remaining HUD funding and new surface transportation policy funds to continue a Bridges-type program in a different suburban area that was more accessible to city residents.

The Impact of Bridges to Work on Participants

After observing the difficulties the sites faced in providing the Bridges services, the question that remained was whether participants' limited experience with Bridges had the intended effect of increasing their employment and earnings via the new job opportunities opened to them. We examined the impact of Bridges to Work on participants across a variety of outcomes that indicate success in the labor market, as well as in other areas of interest, such as receipt of government assistance, household income and residential choices. Overall, we found few differences in outcomes between Bridges to Work participants and the randomly selected control group.

Bridges to Work did not increase participants' probability of obtaining a job or remaining consistently employed. The majority of both Bridges participants and control group members found jobs during the 18 months after they enrolled in Bridges (Table ES1). While the proportion of Bridges participants who were employed in a given quarter increased from approximately 60 to 80 percent over the course of 18 months, the group that was not offered the Bridges services had similar increases in employment over time. Both groups were employed during 12 of the 18 months after enrollment, on average.

Bridges was expected to lead to improved earnings by increasing participants' ability to work more consistently and find better-paying jobs. However, we found that Bridges participants earned more than control group members only in the first quarter after program enrollment. The differences in earnings in subsequent quarters were not statistically significant, nor were differences in annual earnings.

To determine whether Bridges to Work improved participants' ability to obtain better jobs, even after leaving their Bridges jobs, we examined the characteristics of the main job—the one at which an individual worked the longest after coming to the program—held by Bridges participants and control group members. Bridges participants' main jobs were significantly more likely to be located in the suburbs. Both Bridges to Work participants and control group members spent an average of 12 months working

in their main job. There were no significant differences in average hourly wages or in the likelihood that people worked full-time at their main job. While the main jobs were similar in these respects, Bridges participants were more likely to have access to health insurance at their main job as well as to other fringe benefits, including dental benefits, disability and life insurance, pension and retirement plans, paid sick leave, vacation and child-care assistance, with differences ranging from approximately 5 to 9 percentage points. Two factors drove these differences. First, employers located in the suburbs were more likely to offer health insurance than those located in central cities. Second, across all suburban workers, Bridges participants were more likely than control group members to have main jobs in which health insurance was available.

Table ES1

Bridges to Work Impacts on Participants' Employment and Earnings

	Bridges Participants (n=917)	Control Group (n=896)	Difference (T-C)
Ever employed in the 18 months after random assignment	93.4%	91.6%	1.8%
Employed in each quarter after random assignment			
Quarter one	59.8%	58.4%	1.4%
Quarter two	67.5%	67.8%	–0.3%
Quarter three	71.7%	71.2%	0.5%
Quarter four	74.7%	74.0%	0.8%
Quarter five	78.3%	78.7%	–0.3%
Quarter six	82.0%	81.0%	1.0%
Earnings in each quarter after random assignment			
Quarter one	$ 1,934	$ 1,705	$ 229*
Quarter two	$ 2,247	$ 2,159	$ 88
Quarter three	$ 2,460	$ 2,388	$ 72
Quarter four	$ 2,657	$ 2,534	$ 123
Quarter five	$ 2,789	$ 2,736	$ 53
Quarter six	$ 2,840	$ 2,809	$ 31
Annual earnings in months 7 through 18 after random assignment	$ 11,100	$ 10,832	$ 269
Characteristics of main job after random assignment			
Employer located in the suburbs	40.9%	29.3%	11.6%***
Average hourly wage (2001 dollars)	$ 8.37	$ 8.48	– $ 0.12
Health insurance available	65.0%	56.3%	8.7%**

Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.
*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level. "T-C" designates the difference between the Bridges participants (or treatment group) and the control group. Differences may not equal the subtraction of the Bridges participant and control group figures shown due to rounding.*

We examined whether Bridges to Work impacted participants in ways indirectly related to their employment experiences. We found no statistically significant differences between Bridges participants' and control group members' receipt of government assistance, such as welfare or food stamps, at the time of the follow-up interview. Bridges participants' total household income in the month prior to the follow-up survey was $146 greater than that of control group members, a statistically significant difference. As a result, a slightly smaller proportion of Bridges participants were living in households in poverty than were members of the control group (50% versus 54%). Finally, we found that Bridges participants were no more likely than control group members to move or to consider moving to the suburbs.

We examined the outcomes of interest for subgroups of participants whose characteristics may have made them particularly likely to benefit from or be hindered by the Bridges services. Our sample of TANF recipients was too small to detect significant differences in earnings, but when current TANF recipients were grouped with those heading single-parent households, most of whom had received TANF at some time, we found that the Bridges participants in this group had greater earnings than their counterparts in the control group. Bridges participants who were current TANF recipients or single parents did not work more consistently than did control group members, but they earned an average of 74 cents per hour more than controls at their main job, which manifested in a statistically significant difference in annual earnings of $1,401. Bridges participants in these subgroups drove the significant differences observed in the overall sample in total monthly household income and the proportion of households with income below the poverty line. Despite these results, we found that TANF recipients and single parents were not more likely than other program participants to obtain a Bridges job or to retain their Bridges job for longer periods of time. Therefore, we do not know exactly what about the Bridges experience led to the differences observed. But the evidence suggests that TANF recipients and other single parents living in central cities and trying to support a family are more likely than others to benefit from mobility strategies.

The findings on employment, earnings and other outcomes of interest held true at each of the four experimental sites; that is, there were largely no systematic differences between Bridges participants and control group members at individual sites with the exception of the increased availability of health insurance and other benefits. In Chicago, where we did not have a control group against which to compare the Bridges participants' experiences, participants' characteristics and outcomes were similar to those of individuals at the experimental sites. Our findings suggest that the impacts of Bridges to Work in Chicago, if measured, would have been similar to those in the other sites.

Lessons Learned

Given the lack of impacts on participants, the implementation challenges and the costs, we conclude that the Bridges to Work model is not a viable policy response for resolving the mismatch between the location of jobs and the location of unemployed workers. The experiences of those who participated in Bridges to Work make apparent the need for intervention to help poor, inner-city residents access and retain well-paying jobs. During a period of strong economic growth, study participants were unemployed, on average, during a third of the 18 months after they applied to Bridges, their earnings were low and

at the end of the study period half lived in households with income below the poverty line. Despite this need, Bridges to Work did not make a difference in how consistently individuals were employed or result in higher hourly wages and annual earnings. We believe that the lack of results was due to shortcomings in the Bridges model rather than poor implementation. The experience revealed a number of pitfalls that can inform future mobility efforts:

1) The model incorrectly assumed that the sites could create a reasonable, sustainable commute using multipassenger vans or buses while covering great distances. This assumption was based on the expectation that the Bridges programs would be able to recruit a large number of applicants from a geographically small area of the city and place them in jobs in a small employer base in the suburbs. When these assumptions proved to be untrue, the sites could not offer participants a sustainable journey to the distant suburbs they had targeted.

2) The wages and other benefits did not justify the commute for most participants. The suburban jobs held by workers in the demonstration paid only 36 cents per hour more, on average, than did the jobs workers in the city held. In the strong economy, the work-ready job seekers Bridges targeted were able to obtain jobs with similar wages and an easier commute, making the opportunities created by Bridges less appealing. The differential in wages and benefits that Bridges offered was not enough to offset the time and complexity of the commute.

3) The Bridges model could not easily respond to changes in the economy. The experience reveals the difficulty inherent in designing programs based on observed economic trends; it also demonstrates the need to build long-term mobility strategies that have the ability to adapt to change.

4) The model assumed that a large pool of job seekers, who were ready to work but for a lack of transportation and information about suburban job openings, would seek the program's services. The Bridges experience suggests that unemployed inner-city residents who are unable to access employment on their own face barriers beyond transportation and information, and require assistance preparing for their job search and dealing with workplace and personal issues once on the job. While the strong economy may have enabled many of the work-ready individuals sought by Bridges to find jobs on their own, we are not convinced that large numbers of work-ready job seekers would have sought the Bridges services if the economy had been weaker.

5) Transportation service that meets the needs of workers and employers is expensive and impractical for a single nonprofit service provider to maintain. Mobility strategies utilizing vanpools or other shared rides require a scale that a single service agency will find difficult to attain but that perhaps a regional or collaborative effort would be better equipped to achieve.

In conclusion, the Bridges to Work model did not produce a sustainable journey to work due to the complexities of providing services that met the needs of workers and employers, the costs to providers of operating such services and the costs to the workers in time spent commuting. The lessons from Bridges should not be interpreted as diminishing the importance of improving transportation options for low-income job

seekers in order to increase their access to employment opportunities. The demonstration shows only that this particular model for doing so was not successful. The majority of participants were dependent on public transportation to get to work, yet the data reveal that having greater mobility—in the form of a valid driver's license—is associated with having greater wages and annual earnings. Nevertheless, the Bridges experience makes clear that future mobility efforts must gauge whether the wages and benefits available at the targeted jobs will justify the costs in time and complexity to program participants.

Introduction

The Context: Suburban Job Growth and the Concentration of Poverty

Over the past 40 years, metropolitan areas have become increasingly decentralized as people and jobs have moved into the suburbs. Research conducted by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) in the early 1990s, when the Bridges to Work demonstration was designed, found that in several of the nation's largest metropolitan areas virtually all employment growth during the previous decade had taken place in the suburbs (Hughes 1993). By 1996, in 53 percent of large metropolitan areas, the central cities were home to less than half of area jobs (Brennan, Hill 1999). In the same year, only 22 percent of people in the 100 largest metropolitan areas worked within three miles of the city center, while more than a third (35%) worked more than ten miles away (Glaeser, Kahn, Chu 2001). Several studies of metropolitan labor markets have found that most new entry-level job opportunities, for which welfare recipients and other low-skill workers are likely to qualify, are located in the suburbs (Fisher, Weber 2002).

The Bridges to Work designers observed another trend as well: at the same time that the suburbs were thriving, poverty was becoming increasingly concentrated in central cities. In 1990, the poverty rate in the United States as a whole was 13.5 percent, but it was 18 percent in central cities and only 8.1 percent in the suburbs (Grossman, Tierney, McClanahan 1996). Within metropolitan areas, poverty was even further concentrated. The share of metropolitan-area residents living in high-poverty neighborhoods—those in which at least 30 percent of the residents are poor—increased from 25 percent in 1980 to 31 percent in 1990 (Kingsley, Pettit 2003). Residents of high-poverty neighborhoods are more likely than residents of other areas to lack a high school education, to receive public assistance and to be unemployed.

Researchers have long connected the decentralization of employment to the concentration of poverty. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the work of William Julius Wilson contributed to defining the causes and consequences of concentrated poverty. Wilson (1996) linked inner-city unemployment to the loss of jobs in manufacturing and other positions requiring less than a high school education in central cities, and to the difficulty inner-city residents face accessing jobs in the suburbs. Furthermore, as minority residents who are regularly employed move out of the city to the suburbs, poor minority residents become more concentrated and isolated from the people and institutions that can aid their economic advancement. Inner-city neighborhoods offer "few legitimate employment opportunities, inadequate job information networks and poor schools, lead[ing] to the disappearance of work."

These social and economic trends, and the work of Wilson and others, led to increased interest in the concept of spatial mismatch—the idea "that the suburbanization of jobs and serious limitations on black residential choice have acted together to create a surplus of workers relative to the number of available jobs in inner-city neighborhoods where blacks are concentrated... result[ing] in joblessness, lower wages and longer

commutes for black workers." Numerous studies have analyzed what factors limit inner-city residents' ability to connect to suburban jobs. Theories include residents' lack of information about these jobs, difficulty in accessing transportation or supports such as child care, discriminatory hiring practices due to employer or customer prejudice, and residents' fear of applying for suburban jobs (Ihlanfeldt, Sjoquist 1998). In one study of the application and hiring rates of black applicants among city and suburban firms, Holzer found that blacks were less likely to apply for suburban jobs, particularly at small- and medium-sized firms, and that proximity to public transportation and to the black residential population accounted for most of the tendency of city firms to receive applications from blacks. Black applicants were least likely to be hired in suburban clerical, sales and service jobs in small- and medium-size firms. Holzer asserts that this may be attributable to employers' catering to what they presume to be the preferences of their customers (Holzer 1998).

The issue of the location of entry-level workers and jobs became even more prominent in the mid-1990s with the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which required welfare recipients to find work within two years of receiving benefits. The work requirements focused greater public attention on the barriers welfare recipients face in trying to secure employment. Studies of these barriers note that many welfare recipients live in central-city communities that are far from new job opportunities in the suburbs. Most do not own private vehicles due to maintenance and insurance costs and the lack of a valid driver's license, but public transit systems often are not designed for a commute from the city to the suburbs or to serve the off-peak shifts that characterize many entry-level jobs (Fisher, Weber 2002).

Policy Responses

The social and economic trends of the past few decades have led to calls for more metropolitan thinking and programming to connect people to opportunities that exist across jurisdictions (Katz, Allen 1999). Policy responses to the mismatch between the location of jobs and the location of unemployed workers have taken three basic forms.[1] First is a development strategy, in which policymakers take inner-city residence as given and attempt to redevelop the urban employment base, especially within or adjacent to the poor neighborhoods themselves. Second is a dispersal strategy, in which policymakers take suburban job growth as given and attempt to improve inner-city residents' access to suburban housing. Past and present large-scale policy initiatives exemplify these two strategies. Examples of the development strategy are HUD's Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. One example of the dispersal strategy is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Opportunities program (Kling, Liebman, Katz et al. 2004).

A third approach—a mobility strategy—takes as given both city residential locations and suburban job locations, and focuses on overcoming the barriers that prevent the two from being connected by a sustainable journey to work. The presumed barriers include the blocked transmission of information about job opportunities, the localized administration of job placement services and the conventional orientation of public transportation. Instead of intervening in the basic geography of metropolitan housing and labor markets, mobility strategies try to help low-income inner-city workers access existing opportunities in decentralized metropolitan areas.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Ford, MacArthur and Rockefeller foundations, P/PV's Bridges to Work demonstration was designed to test this third strategy: that is, whether efforts to connect inner-city workers to suburban jobs would result in better employment opportunities and earnings for these workers. In the early 1990s, P/PV studied 20 major U.S. metropolitan areas that had significant numbers of poor urban residents and a strong and continuing trend of job growth in the suburbs; nine cities were chosen to be part of the initial planning phase, of which five were selected to take part in the demonstration. The participating sites—Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee and St. Louis—formed collaborations among both public and private agencies to provide placement-ready inner-city residents with the three elements of Bridges to Work: a metropolitan job placement mechanism, transportation services to facilitate a city-suburban commute and supportive services that addressed the challenges of the suburban commute.

The 1990s Economic Boom

Bridges to Work was implemented during the economic boom of the late 1990s, a time of strong productivity, job growth and unemployment rates that fell to their lowest levels in three decades. During the economic expansion, central-city job growth rivaled suburban job growth (1.8% versus 1.9%) for the first time in 30 years. Between 1993 and 1999, urban unemployment rates fell nearly 40 percent, from 8.5 to 5.2 percent (Katz, Allen 1999). The 1990s also saw a reversal of the trend of the previous two decades, with poverty becoming less concentrated. The share of the metropolitan poor living in high-poverty neighborhoods dropped from 31 percent in 1990 to 26 percent in 2000. The largest reductions in concentrated poverty were in the Midwest, the location of three of the Bridges programs (Kingsley, Pettit 2003).

This is not to say that the conditions that led to the creation of Bridges to Work no longer existed; they did. Unemployment and poverty rates continued to be significantly higher in inner-city neighborhoods, and the entry-level jobs for which low-skill workers are qualified continued to flourish in the suburbs. But the economic boom meant increased employment opportunities for the work-ready residents that Bridges programs targeted. During the boom, employers were more willing to hire such disadvantaged workers as minorities, welfare recipients and workers without recent experience or a high school education (Holzer, Raphael, Stoll 2003). As we will discuss in this report, increased employment opportunities had significant implications for the Bridges programs' recruitment and placement of participants.

The Bridges to Work Research Design

The Bridges to Work demonstration operated over an approximately four-year period starting in late 1996 and ending in early 2001. To determine the impact of participation in Bridges to Work, P/PV conducted an evaluation using a random assignment design in four sites: Baltimore, Denver, Milwaukee and St. Louis. From May 1997 through July 1999, the four sites enrolled a total of 2,360 people, half of whom were randomly assigned to a treatment group and half to a control group. To be eligible, applicants had to be age 18 or older, reside in one of the targeted zip codes and have a household

income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. A breakdown of the study sample by site and treatment status appears in Appendix A.

Each person in the treatment group was eligible for up to 18 months of Bridges to Work placement, transportation and retention services. People in the control group did not receive Bridges services but could reapply for them 18 months after their first random assignment. In the interim, control group members could seek services from other agencies or programs. Before random assignment, each applicant completed a baseline survey conducted on the telephone. All treatment and control group members were contacted again 18 months after random assignment to complete a follow-up interview about their employment and earnings, receipt of public assistance and housing situation. Overall, 77 percent of study participants—78 percent of treatment group members and 77 percent of control group members—completed the second interview. With the random assignment design, differences in outcomes between the treatment and control groups could be attributed to participation in Bridges to Work.

In a fifth site, Chicago, P/PV conducted a separate study, not designed to measure program impacts but to understand how large a mobility program could be and how a program must adapt its transportation strategy to serve significantly more participants. Chicago Bridges to Work sought to place workers in targeted suburbs without the constraints of random assignment. However, due to low enrollment and low retention in the program, the demonstration did not offer a true test of operating a mobility program at large scale. While no baseline survey was done in Chicago, a follow-up survey was conducted to assess the potential of the program by comparing the outcomes of participants in Chicago with those of participants in the other sites, particularly in nearby Milwaukee, which served a similar population. We attempted to interview 388 Chicago participants who enrolled in Bridges between May 1997 and December 1998,[2] of whom 260, or 67 percent, completed the survey.

The Research Questions

The impact study sought to address the following key questions:

- **Did participants' earnings improve when they became involved in the Bridges to Work program?** We expected participation in Bridges to Work to break down informational and transportation-related barriers that bar the entrance of inner-city residents to the suburban labor market. Bridges to Work would provide information about jobs in the suburbs as well as more affordable (both in terms of time and money) access to that labor market. In the short run, this access was expected to increase the probability that participants were employed. We also hypothesized that participants would be able to make better subsequent job matches and continue to have better jobs even after they left the program because the knowledge they gained about the suburban job market and reverse commuting would allow them to search over a broader set of job possibilities.

- **Did involvement in Bridges to Work decrease participants' receipt of public assistance, including TANF, food stamps and the use of public housing?** By increasing employment and earnings, we expected that participation in Bridges to Work would indirectly affect participants' receipt of public assistance.

- **Did participants' residential decision-making change as a result of participating in Bridges to Work?** Did participants choose to move to the suburbs or stay in their communities? Because we were unlikely to see large changes in residential patterns within the study period, we asked participants both whether they moved and whether they planned to move in the near future.

Structure of the Report

The report focuses on participants' experiences with Bridges to Work and the impact that program participation had on their employment, earnings and other outcomes.[3] Chapter II describes the Bridges to Work sites and the services they provided. Chapter III provides information on the background characteristics of the study participants as well as their experiences with the Bridges to Work programs. Chapter IV examines the impact that participation in Bridges to Work had on employment and earnings, receipt of public assistance and residential decision-making, among other outcomes. Chapter V provides information on the costs of running an employment transportation program and Chapter VI summarizes the lessons learned from the Bridges to Work demonstration.

The Bridges to Work Programs

After two years of planning, P/PV selected the five cities to participate in Bridges to Work based on their demonstrated capacity to manage and sustain the new metropolitan-wide partnerships they had built—among governmental agencies, community organizations, employer representatives, transportation providers and others—to support the Bridges model. The four experimental sites operated Bridges programs from mid-1997 through early 2001. The organizations that implemented Bridges were a mix of nonprofit service providers and intermediary agencies. A brief description of the four experimental sites follows.

- Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC) is an organization responsible for administering the city's Empowerment Zone programs in East Baltimore, the neighborhood served by the initiative.

- Curtis Park Community Center (CPCC) is a multipurpose human services agency under contract with the City of Denver's Mayor's Office of Employment and Training and located in a neighborhood served by the initiative.

- Milwaukee County Private Industry Council (PIC) initially administered the program out of a community-based employment and training organization, Milwaukee Careers Cooperative, and later out of the PIC's downtown headquarters.

- East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (EWGCC) is the region's metropolitan planning organization, located in downtown St. Louis.

The scale site, Chicago, operated its program from late 1996 through early 2001. Here Bridges was implemented by Suburban Job Link (SJL), a job placement and transportation agency formerly located in suburban Chicago. SJL was the only Bridges to Work organization that had prior experience providing transportation services to low-income workers.

The Targeted Communities

During the planning phase, each organization selected an "origin" area in the city from which it would recruit job seekers and a "destination" area in the suburbs where it would place participants in jobs. The sites targeted areas where they believed there would be high demand for Bridges services both by city residents who needed jobs and by employers in the suburbs who needed workers. The sites were required to choose suburban employment areas that were underserved or not served by existing public transportation lines.

The urban neighborhoods the experimental sites selected were often within the boundaries of Empowerment or Enterprise Zones and contained large numbers of public housing units. Baltimore's origin neighborhoods were in a single geographic section of the city (East Baltimore). Milwaukee's program targeted neighborhoods in both the northern and southern sections of the city, while the programs in Denver and St. Louis targeted urban neighborhoods that spanned the inner city and adjacent inner-ring suburbs.

The suburban destinations were located between 15 and 30 miles from the origin neighborhoods and contained either industrial or business complexes with large concentrations of employers. In Baltimore and St. Louis, the programs targeted suburban employment areas surrounding an airport.

The scale site, Chicago, targeted a single geographic section of the city (West Chicago) and a suburban community neighboring O'Hare International Airport that contains one of the country's largest industrial parks.

Recruitment of Inner-City Job Seekers

P/PV and the Bridges programs expected that there would be a large pool of job seekers in the targeted communities who would be ready and willing to go to work in the suburbs if the opportunity were opened to them. The programs initially targeted fairly small geographic areas from which to recruit participants and expected many program applicants to be referred by other employment and training providers that were not able to place and transport their graduates to jobs in the suburbs. However, recruitment became a significant challenge when other service providers proved unwilling or unable to refer qualified applicants, so there resulted a lower-than-anticipated interest in Bridges in the targeted communities.

A number of factors likely affected recruitment for Bridges. The programs were new and unproven and, at the experimental sites, only half the eligible applicants were offered services due to the random assignment design. The strong economy meant that more job opportunities were available, particularly for those who were ready to work. Unemployment rates among urban residents were declining, as were poverty rates in some formerly highly distressed neighborhoods. A combination of all these factors reduced interest in Bridges to Work, among both the targeted inner-city job seekers and the potential referral agencies serving this population.

When the anticipated large numbers of work-ready job seekers interested in Bridges services did not materialize, the programs modified their recruitment strategies to expand their applicant pools. They implemented extensive direct outreach campaigns and expanded the geographic areas from which they attempted to recruit job seekers.[4] Ultimately, the four experimental Bridges to Work sites recruited 2,360 people over two years—74 percent of their goal of 3,200—of whom 1,182 were assigned to the treatment group and eligible to receive the Bridges services. In Chicago, where the goal was to operate a Bridges program at scale, 845 participants were enrolled between November 1996 and February 2000, or 56 percent of the program's goal of 1,500.

The Bridges to Work Services

Job Placement

The Bridges to Work programs were expected to provide job placement assistance to address the barriers faced by inner-city residents in searching for suburban jobs, including a lack of information about job openings and a lack of transportation to conduct a job search in the suburbs. Initially, P/PV assumed that there was a pool of people who were ready to work; therefore, the original Bridges design did not include either job preparation or occupational skills training. However, the sites found themselves helping people who needed more than just information or transportation. Since people seeking employment through Bridges needed additional assistance preparing for work, all four experimental sites added one to three days of job readiness training to their programs.[5] Staff provided participants with instruction on searching for a job, including writing a résumé, completing an application, and dressing and preparing for an interview. They also advised participants on the soft skills needed to obtain and keep a job, such as having a positive attitude, being willing to learn and take instruction from supervisors, and getting to work on time every day.

The Bridges programs used a mix of staff-led job development and participant-led job search activities to identify job openings and make placements. All the sites provided job seekers free transportation to suburban employers to fill out applications and go on interviews. Three of the experimental sites—Denver, Milwaukee and St. Louis —emphasized staff-led job development efforts. Staff members identified job openings, sent participants' résumés to employers and arranged interviews. Baltimore and the scale site, Chicago, believed that employers would be more receptive to receiving calls or visits from the job seekers themselves rather than from a staff person from a "social program." In these cities, program staff identified employers with job openings and encouraged participants to search for jobs in the newspaper or through cold calling of employers; the programs then transported job seekers to the employment sites to complete applications and go on interviews. Later in the initiative, Baltimore Bridges staff became more proactive in developing jobs and following up with employers concerning specific candidates, as staff found that many applicants were giving up on their job search too quickly.

Transportation

Bridges transportation services were designed to provide city residents with access to otherwise inaccessible suburban job locations. The sites collaborated with local public and private transit providers to develop systems that would complement the existing transit structure and meet local needs. Table 1 summarizes the transportation services provided by each site. The Bridges programs in both Baltimore and Milwaukee contracted with private, for-profit transit providers to operate 14-passenger vans, which picked participants up at several locations in the targeted city neighborhoods and drove them to the doorsteps of their suburban employers. Participants walked, got a ride or took public transportation to the neighborhood pickup points.

Similarly, St. Louis Bridges contracted with a nonprofit service organization, and later a nonprofit transit provider, to offer service on 14-passenger vans—the primary difference from the other sites being that in St. Louis the vans picked up participants at one public transportation hub at the edge of the city and drove them to their suburban employers. Participants were responsible for getting to the transit hub on their own, although the program provided a transit pass for their first month in the program.

Table 1
The Bridges To Work Transportation Services

	Random Assignment Sites				Scale Site
	Baltimore	Denver	Milwaukee	St. Louis	Chicago
Agency providing transportation					
For-profit transit provider	✓	✓	✓		
Nonprofit transit provider				✓	
Nonprofit service provider				✓	✓
Public transit agency		✓			
Vehicle type					
14-passenger vans	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
50-passenger buses		✓			✓
Pickup points in origin	Ten stops in neighborhood	Public transit stops or in neighborhood	Five stops throughout city	One transit hub on city's edge	Public transit stops along two corridors
Approximate distance from origin to destination (in miles)	15	30	20	23	26

The Denver Bridges program developed a system that combined large-bus service and smaller vans. Denver Bridges first expanded the existing fixed-route public bus service to better serve the targeted suburban employer area and provided participants with free monthly bus passes. The site supplemented this service for a time by contracting with two private transit providers that offered flexible van service for shifts and employers that the expanded bus service could not reach.

In Chicago, Suburban Job Link (SJL) used its own buses, which picked participants up at existing bus stops along two major corridors in the city and dropped them off within half a block of their employers. Chicago supplemented this service with smaller vans to take people on job search activities and later used the vans to transport workers to their jobs from SJL's suburban office. Both Denver and Chicago initially planned to implement van pools but found that there were not enough participants who had driver's licenses and could obtain insurance.

The Bridges programs charged employees varying amounts for using Bridges transportation. Riders paid $24 per week for the van service in Baltimore and $1 per ride for the van service in Milwaukee. Van service to the suburbs was free to riders in St. Louis, though city transit was not; in Denver, both the van service and bus passes were provided free. In Chicago, riders paid $2 per ride for the bus service.

Employment Retention

The original Bridges to Work design allowed the programs to offer services that could help participants sustain their connection to the suburban labor market by addressing problems created or exacerbated by the suburban commute. Among the supportive services included in the programs' original plans were a guaranteed ride home in an emergency, payment of day-care costs to cover the extra hour or two necessitated by the daily commute and staff assistance dealing with diversity issues in the workplace. Because the assumption was that participants would be job-ready, the sites were not to provide services or supports unrelated to the suburban job location, such as full-day child-care assistance or drug or alcohol counseling.

Once the initiative was underway, the sites realized that paying for the extra hours of child care required by the suburban commute was an administrative burden they were not prepared to take on. The sites did guarantee that a participant could get a ride home from the suburbs if an emergency arose during a shift, such as the need to pick up a sick child from school or day care. The sites used either the vans or a taxi service for this purpose.

Once it became clear that the Bridges participants were not as ready to work as expected, P/PV encouraged the sites to follow up with participants after placement and provide support or assistance to help them keep their jobs. However, the sites' budgets did not allow for a significant investment in supportive services. Baltimore Bridges had the most extensive post-placement services, including seminars on setting goals, career development and budgeting, as well as a network of public and private agencies to which staff could refer participants for services. Staff provided individual counseling, and the site trained its van drivers on how to coach participants to help them retain their jobs. Denver and St. Louis dedicated staff to following up with participants after placement to check whether their commutes had gone smoothly and to counsel them as they transitioned into their new suburban workplaces. Staff in Milwaukee and Chicago responded when they learned that an employee was not showing up for work or had lost his job.

The Employers Who Hired Bridges to Work Participants

The Bridges experience indicates that in a tight economy suburban employers, both small and large, are willing to hire minority inner-city residents. The four experimental Bridges to Work sites placed participants in jobs with approximately 290 suburban employers over the course of the demonstration; Chicago placed participants with 182 employers. The programs placed a significant number of people in the retail and service industries (Table 2), where past research has indicated that suburban employers are the least likely to hire black, inner-city residents (Holzer 1998). At the experimental sites, more than 4 in 10 Bridges employers were small establishments of 50 or fewer employees; in Chicago, more than 6 in 10 were small establishments.

Across the board, the employers we interviewed said they were working with Bridges because they could not recruit enough entry-level workers to fill their positions through other means. Job openings resulted from employers expanding their suburban workforce, as well as turnover among entry-level employees. At the experimental sites, among employers who responded to a survey administered by program staff,[6] more

than half (59%) had started operating in their suburban location during the 1990s; 58 percent had experienced an increase in the total number of employees in the previous 12 months. Nearly half (47%) said that fewer than three quarters of their entry-level employees complete 12 months on the job. On average, the employers said they typically had six vacancies for entry-level positions in each one-month period; the median number of vacancies was three.

Table 2
The Bridges To Work Employers

	Baltimore (n=49)	Denver (n=72)	Milwaukee (n=24)	St. Louis (n=23)	All RA Sites (n=168)	Chicago (n=60)
Industry						
Services	52.1%	55.6%	16.7%	50.0%	48.2%	18.3%
Manufacturing	12.5%	4.2%	79.2%	31.8%	21.1%	40.0%
Wholesale/Retail Trade	20.8%	13.9%	4.2%	4.5%	13.3%	23.3%
Finance and Insurance	2.1%	15.3%	0.0%	4.5%	7.8%	1.7%
Other	12.5%	11.1%	0.0%	9.1%	9.6%	16.7%
Size (employees)						
Small (1 to 50)	45.8%	47.9%	29.2%	34.8%	43.5%	61.0%
Medium (51 to 100)	29.2%	8.5%	33.3%	17.4%	19.0%	18.6%
Large (101 or more)	25.0%	43.7%	37.5%	47.8%	37.5%	20.3%
Plan to expand entry-level workforce in next 12 months	38.8%	45.1%	65.2%	34.8%	44.6%	44.2%

Source: P/PV analysis of employer data collected from the Bridges sites. "All RA Sites" refers to the four experimental or random assignment sites combined.

Despite the difficulty they faced filling entry-level positions, only 9 percent of employers had ever paid for employees' transportation costs in the past. Milwaukee Bridges required employers to pay $2 per day per employee for the transportation services. While this requirement may have deterred some employers from participating in the program, enough were willing to do so for the site to place 68 percent of its participants. There were also examples of employers in the other sites that were willing to either pay for part of a participant's ride or to be flexible about the start of a shift to accommodate the transportation schedule, although this was not the norm.

Conclusions

While the Bridges programs employed varying strategies to connect inner-city job seekers to suburban jobs, they all provided the basic elements intended in the demonstration's design. These included job placement assistance to break down the information and transportation barriers faced by poor urban residents searching for jobs in the suburbs, transportation to jobs in the targeted suburbs, a guaranteed ride home and counseling on dealing with issues that arose in their new suburban workplaces.

Once program implementation got underway, the sites learned that some of the original assumptions about the pool of available job seekers and what services they would require were incorrect, at least in a tight economy. Recruitment proved more difficult than anticipated, and the job seekers who did come to Bridges were not as prepared to work as the original program design presumed they would be.

The Bridges sites responded to these challenges by implementing new recruitment strategies and offering limited job preparation and retention services. The programs also learned how to structure their transportation services and what kinds of jobs to target. In the first few months of the demonstration, the sites learned that they had to adjust their job development approach because applicants did not have the skills needed for some of the jobs that had been developed. Denver learned that relying on expanded fixed-route bus service limited its ability to place people with employers sprawled throughout developing suburban areas. St. Louis reconfigured its transportation so that the more flexible van service circulated to drop people off in the suburban employer area rather than using it to pick people up in urban neighborhoods.

One hypothesis that would explain why the programs had difficulty attracting work-ready job seekers was that these individuals were able to find jobs on their own given the strong economy. However, we do not know if large numbers of job seekers who were ready to work but for a lack of information and transportation would have been present or would have sought Bridges services if the economy had been weak. Certainly the sites' experiences suggest that efforts to connect inner-city job seekers to suburban jobs should include job preparation and retention services in their program design. An important consequence of the difficulties the sites faced was the decision to increase the geographic areas from which they recruited applicants. As the next chapter will address, this change had significant implications for the transportation services and participants' commutes to their Bridges jobs.

The Participants and Their Experiences with Bridges to Work

The Bridges to Work programs attempted to recruit inner-city job seekers whom they believed could be placed in jobs in the targeted suburbs. As a result, the Bridges participants as a group appear more job-ready than residents of high-poverty neighborhoods as a whole: most had a high school diploma or GED and recent work experience. However, the Bridges participants faced other potential barriers to securing and maintaining employment, such as criminal conviction, the lack of a valid driver's license and inconsistent work histories. At the same time, they faced a long commute to the Bridges jobs, which often involved multiple segments. All these factors affected participants' ability and desire to work in a job in the targeted suburbs.

In the next section, we describe the characteristics of the study participants at the random assignment sites, including their work experience, education, experience with the suburbs and their households.[7] There were no meaningful differences in the characteristics of the Bridges and control group members; therefore, we present data for the full sample.

The Background Characteristics of Participants

Just over half (54%) of Bridges participants were female, and almost all (97%) were members of a minority group. On average, the participants were 33 years old at the time they applied to the program; 30 percent were aged 18 to 24, and 25 percent were 40 and above. The basic demographics of the study participants varied somewhat by city. Milwaukee was the only experimental site to serve a higher percentage of men than women (Table 3). Denver was the most racially diverse site, serving two thirds of the study's nonblack participants and a higher percentage of young adults aged 18 to 24.

The Bridges programs were expected to target inner-city residents faced with transportation barriers. Although 80 percent of participants said they lived within a five-minute walk of a bus or train stop, most faced significant barriers to obtaining jobs that were not along public transportation routes. Only 35 percent had a valid driver's license, and only 6 percent had both a valid license and daily access to a car or truck.

In addition to transportation barriers, about 3 in 10 participants—and 45 percent of male participants—reported having a prior criminal conviction, potentially limiting their employment opportunities.

Most had a high school diploma or GED and recent work experience

The Bridges programs sought people who appeared to have a good attitude about working and learning, who showed up on time for appointments and who did not have personal or family issues that would interfere with holding a job in the suburbs. Staff

looked for people who had worked recently and somewhat consistently and, in most sites, had at least a high school diploma or GED.

In fact, 85 percent of all Bridges participants had at least a high school diploma or GED. Baltimore required this level of education to meet the demands of its suburban employers; on the other hand, Milwaukee enrolled the highest percentage of participants with no high school diploma or GED (32%) after determining that a number of its manufacturing employers did not have this requirement. Very few participants had any postsecondary education, such as an associate's or other college degree (6%) or technical or business certificate (6%).

Table 3

Background Characteristics of the Study Participants

	Baltimore (n=557)	Denver (n=466)	Milwaukee (n=379)	St. Louis (n=411)	All RA Sites (n=1,813)
Gender					
Female	57.5%	59.4%	38.2%	56.0%	53.5%
Male	42.5%	40.6%	61.8%	44.0%	46.5%
Race/ethnicity					
Black or African American	95.3%	62.7%	90.1%	95.1%	85.8%
Latino	0.4%	13.7%	2.3%	0.2%	4.2%
White	0.5%	6.9%	2.6%	1.5%	2.8%
Multiracial or other race	3.8%	16.7%	4.9%	3.2%	7.2%
Age					
Average (years)	34.0%	29.0%	34.0%	33.0%	33.0%
18 to 24	24.9%	47.5%	21.7%	25.6%	30.2%
25 to 39	45.8%	35.1%	53.3%	45.6%	44.6%
40 and above	29.4%	17.4%	25.1%	28.8%	25.3%
Highest degree earned					
None	2.9%	16.3%	31.9%	15.9%	15.4%
GED	14.5%	18.9%	17.9%	14.6%	16.4%
High school diploma	71.5%	54.1%	38.7%	53.7%	56.1%
Technical certificate, associates or other degree	11.1%	10.7%	11.4%	15.9%	12.2%
TANF recipient at time of application to Bridges	15.8%	10.1%	13.0%	21.7%	15.1%
Ever convicted of a crime	24.0%	35.1%	44.3%	17.3%	29.6%
Had a valid driver's license and access to a car or truck	0.7%	3.0%	9.6%	13.1%	6.0%

Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline survey data.

Most participants had worked during the year prior to applying to Bridges to Work, and many had worked consistently in a full-time job in the past. The median length of the longest full-time job that participants ever held was 2.5 years; one quarter had never worked in a full-time job that lasted a year or more. About two thirds (69%) of participants had worked full-time at some point during the year prior to applying to Bridges to Work; only 12 percent had not worked in any job during the previous year. The majority of participants were unemployed at the time they applied to Bridges; only 1 in 10 was employed full-time at the time of application, ranging from 6 percent in Baltimore and Denver to 20 percent in Milwaukee; 17 percent were employed either part-time or in multiple jobs.

At their most recent job before applying to Bridges to Work, applicants earned $7.67 per hour on average (2001 dollars). Three quarters of participants took public transportation to their most recent job, ranging from 63 percent in Milwaukee to 80 percent in Baltimore; only 8 percent drove their own cars for at least part of their commute. The median commute time between home and job was 30 minutes.

Most had not lived in the suburbs, but just over half had looked for a job there

One might expect residents of poverty-stricken inner-city neighborhoods who are isolated from mainstream social institutions to have little experience with the suburbs. In fact, most Bridges participants had lived only in urban centers during the previous decade. Almost two thirds (63%) of all participants had lived only in the city where they currently resided for the past 10 years, ranging from 50 percent in Denver to 78 percent in Baltimore. Only 15 percent of applicants had lived in a suburb during the previous 10 years. However, most participants had some experience with the suburbs. Just over half (54%) of applicants said they had ever looked for a job in the suburbs. Just under half (47%) had family or friends who lived in the suburbs, and three quarters had gone to the suburbs in the past year to shop, visit friends or family, or attend events. Participants in Milwaukee tended to have the least experience with the suburbs, while those in St. Louis were most likely to have looked for a job or to have other experiences with the suburbs (Table 4). It is possible that individuals who were attracted to Bridges to Work had more experience with the suburbs than did residents not seeking the programs' services.

Table 4

Participants' Experience with the Suburbs Prior to Applying to Bridges to Work

	Baltimore (n=557)	Denver (n=466)	Milwaukee (n=379)	St. Louis (n=411)	All RA Sites (n=1,813)
Ever looked for a job in the suburbs	55.7%	47.5%	50.1%	63.5%	54.2%
Lived in the suburbs in the past 10 years	10.8%	21.3%	12.6%	16.5%	15.2%
Currently has family or friends who live in the suburbs	53.3%	47.4%	27.9%	57.7%	47.4%
Went to suburbs in past year to shop, visit friends, attend events	80.6%	73.1%	66.2%	83.9%	76.4%

Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline survey data.

Most did not have preschool-aged children

Just under half (44%) of Bridges participants lived with their own children under age 18; about one quarter of all participants (24%) lived with children under age six. Almost two thirds (63%) lived with at least one other adult; 20 percent were the heads of single-parent households; 17 percent lived alone. Of the participants who had preschool-aged children, just over half (52%) had at least one child who was not enrolled in a formal program such as Head Start, formal day care or another preschool program. Ten percent of all participants had children with health problems that limited their activity or required special medicine or equipment.

Most lived in very low-income households

Participants lived in very low-income households with an average income of $994 in the month prior to applying to Bridges; almost three quarters (72%) of participants' households had incomes below the federal poverty line. Only 58 percent of households had income from work in the previous month. Many participants relied on public assistance (Table 5). Three percent said they had no permanent housing at the time they applied to Bridges to Work; just under one third (32%) said they had ever been homeless.

Table 5

Households' Receipt of Public Assistance in the Month Prior to Application

	Baltimore (n=557)	Denver (n=466)	Milwaukee (n=379)	St. Louis (n=411)	All RA Sites (n=1,813)
Received TANF, General Assistance or welfare	23.9%	14.0%	17.4%	27.1%	20.7%
Received food stamps	40.5%	30.5%	35.1%	45.1%	37.8%
Lived in public or Section 8 housing	20.9%	25.4%	25.5%	15.8%	21.8%

Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline survey data.

Although Bridges to Work was implemented at the same time that welfare reform arrived in several states, the sites were concerned that commuting to distant suburbs was not the best way for women leaving welfare to reenter the labor market, because of their lack of recent work experience and child-care needs. While 43 percent of all participants had ever received AFDC or TANF for their own children, only 15 percent of all participants—and 27 percent of female participants—were receiving welfare at the time they applied to Bridges.

Participants' Experiences with the Bridges to Work Programs

The following information about participants' Bridges to Work experiences, including their placement in Bridges jobs, their retention in those jobs and their commute, is based on data collected from the Bridges sites as well as focus groups and interviews with the participants.

Why Participants Applied to Bridges to Work

When asked why they applied to Bridges to Work, participants across the five sites said they applied because there were few jobs in the city or because city jobs paid minimum wage and did not offer benefits. Some believed suburban jobs paid more than city jobs for the same type of work, while others did not believe the jobs paid more money but thought they offered more benefits and better opportunities for advancement. Participants faced barriers searching for jobs because they were unemployed and did not have the money to fax résumés or travel to job interviews, particularly those held in the suburbs. They expected Bridges to Work to be their link to better jobs and a brighter future.

Placement in Bridges Jobs

Across the four experimental sites, 64 percent of the individuals randomly assigned to receive Bridges to Work services were placed in jobs in the targeted suburban employer area, ranging from 57 percent in St. Louis to 73 percent in Denver (Table 6). The average length of time between enrollment and placement in a Bridges job was 33 days; just under half (47%) of placements took place within two weeks of enrollment. About half the participants placed made multiple journeys to the suburbs for interviews before obtaining a job; more than a quarter went on three or more interviews, ranging from about 8 percent in Milwaukee to almost half (49%) in St. Louis. As Table 6 shows, sites with shorter lengths of time between enrollment and the initial job placement, and sites with fewer interviews, tended to have higher placement rates.

There appear to be multiple reasons why more than a third of the Bridges participants were never placed in a job in the targeted suburbs. Participants and staff reported that a number of people who were not placed within a couple weeks found jobs on their own. This was to be expected if the Bridges programs succeeded in recruiting work-ready residents; with the economy growing, participants who were ready to work were able to find jobs and to be more selective in terms of the jobs they were willing to take. In focus groups, some participants said they would only apply for jobs that paid a certain amount of money, which at times was more than what the Bridges jobs offered. Others said the job openings in the Bridges programs were not in the field they wanted and therefore they were waiting for the right job to come along. This was particularly true early in the initiative when the Bridges staff were learning both what positions were available in the targeted employment areas as well as the skills and interests of the job seekers applying to Bridges to Work. Finally, for family or other reasons, some participants did not want the second- or third-shift jobs that were available.

Table 6
Bridges to Work Job Placement Outcomes

	Baltimore (n=331)	Denver (n=310)	Milwaukee (n=268)	St. Louis (n=273)	All RA Sites (n=1,182)
Ever placed in a Bridges job	59.5%	72.6%	68.3%	56.8%	64.3%
Average days between enrollment and placement	35.7%	21.1%	29.3%	53.2%	33.4%
Number of job interviews before initial placement					
One	45.1%	46.1%	76.9%	26.3%	49.3%
Two	25.1%	29.0%	15.4%	24.3%	23.7%
Three or more	29.7%	24.9%	7.7%	49.3%	26.9%

Source: P/PV analysis of job data collected from the Bridges sites.

Participants also faced barriers other than transportation that prevented them from obtaining a Bridges job. According to staff and employers, some participants failed employers' drug tests or skills tests; others did not follow through with appointments. The Bridges programs had difficult decisions to make when a participant did not show up for an interview or accept a job offer. Continuing to work with these participants could have hurt the programs' relationships with employers, and, therefore, the sites chose not to work with certain participants who did not show a commitment to getting a job in the targeted suburbs.

The Characteristics of the Bridges to Work Jobs

The majority of Bridges participants were placed in full-time jobs that offered health benefits and paid between $6.00 and $8.00 per hour. On average, participants' starting hourly wage in a Bridges job was $7.87 (Table 7), ranging from $7.47 in St. Louis to $8.24 in Denver. Almost all participants (98%) obtained full-time jobs[8] but the shifts varied greatly: 60 percent were placed in first-shift jobs and 22 percent in second-shift jobs. Eighteen percent had rotating or other shifts. As discussed below, the second- and third-shift jobs posed challenges for both the Bridges transportation services and the participants.

Almost all (93%) of the Bridges jobs offered health benefits. However, most participants (91%) were required to complete a probationary period before becoming eligible for benefits and to pay for part or the entire health insurance premium once they became eligible. About 4 in 10 participants (42%) were eligible for paid vacation days in their first year on the job; only 28 percent were eligible for paid sick days.

Table 7
Characteristics of the Bridges to Work Jobs

	Baltimore (n=197)	Denver (n=225)	Milwaukee (n=183)	St. Louis (n=155)	All RA Sites (n=760)
Average starting hourly wage (2001 dollars)	$ 7.86	$ 8.24	$ 7.76	$ 7.47	$ 7.87
Health benefits available					
Yes, after probation period	95.3%	83.3%	97.9%	89.2%	91.1%
Yes, immediately	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	8.1%	2.3%
No	4.7%	14.3%	2.1%	2.7%	6.6%
Occupation					
Factory	4.6%	6.2%	48.1%	40.0%	22.8%
Warehouse	22.3%	8.9%	41.0%	12.3%	20.8%
Hospitality	10.7%	15.1%	0.5%	9.0%	9.2%
Food service	14.7%	11.1%	0.0%	3.9%	7.9%
Clerical	8.1%	14.2%	0.0%	7.7%	7.9%
Health care	18.3%	0.4%	1.1%	12.3%	7.6%
Customer service	3.0%	20.4%	0.0%	1.3%	7.1%
Machine shop	3.0%	0.9%	7.7%	3.2%	3.6%

Source: P/PV analysis of job data collected from the Bridges sites.

Overall, 43 percent of the Bridges to Work placements were in factory or warehouse jobs, although this varied significantly by site. In Baltimore and Denver, the majority of participants were employed in service-sector jobs, including customer service, health care, food service and clerical work (Table 7).

The Challenge of Providing a Sustainable Commute

Participants' commutes to their Bridges to Work jobs, as reported by the sites, were lengthy. More than half (53%) of participants had one-way commutes that lasted more than 45 minutes; 27 percent had commutes lasting longer than 60 minutes (Table 8). In Denver, three quarters of participants had commutes lasting longer than an hour. For many participants, these figures understate the actual amount of time from home to work. For example, in Baltimore, which had the shortest commute of all sites, the van ride from the origin neighborhood to the suburbs took 30 to 45 minutes, but participants often had to arrive at the pickup point 75 minutes prior to the start of their shift to allow time for multiple stops in both the origin neighborhoods and the suburbs.

Table 8
The Commute to the Bridges to Work Jobs

Length of commute	Baltimore (n=197)	Denver (n=225)	Milwaukee (n=183)	St. Louis (n=155)	All RA Sites (n=760)
16 to 30 minutes	7.6%	1.0%	1.7%	0.5%	2.7%
31 to 45 minutes	89.9%	8.2%	50.6%	32.1%	43.9%
46 to 60 minutes	1.3%	15.1%	47.2%	51.9%	26.8%
More than 60 minutes	1.3%	75.6%	0.4%	15.5%	26.6%

Source: P/PV analysis of job data collected from the Bridges sites.

An assumption underlying Bridges to Work was that the programs would offer inner-city job seekers not just a commute to the suburban labor market but one that was reasonable in terms of time and money and, therefore, sustainable. However, because the sites expanded the geographic areas from which they recruited people in order to increase the number of participants, providing transportation became more challenging. One result was that some participants had longer than anticipated travel to the Bridges pickup locations. Another consequence was that the programs had to expand the number of pickup points in the city, with vans stopping multiple times to pick up workers prior to heading out to the suburban employment area; this added extra time to the commute, particularly for those who were picked up first.

The sheer number of employers—and their individual demands—also encumbered the sites' ability to provide a sustainable door-to-door commute. The programs had to work with numerous employers to place participants in jobs, ranging from 24 employers in Milwaukee to 95 in Baltimore and 122 in Denver. This meant there were often multiple stops in the suburban destination as well as in the origin neighborhoods. In addition, participants at times had to be dropped off or picked up 15 to 30 minutes before or after their shifts. This could be particularly difficult if the worksite was closed during this time and participants had to wait outside in bad weather.

The transportation services also had to serve multiple shifts and multiple start times within a shift. A survey of employer start times conducted in Chicago uncovered nine different first-shift start times between 5 a.m. and 9 a.m. The programs did not have the capacity or the ridership to operate buses or vans to serve each time slot. A participant who took a job with an 8:30 a.m. start time might have to ride the same bus or van as did participants with start times at 8 a.m. or earlier and wait for the beginning of the shift. Late-night shifts, when most public transportation does not operate, also made it difficult for participants to get home from the Bridges transit stops if they did not live nearby or feared walking home.

Retention of Bridges to Work Jobs

Although participants were eligible to use the Bridges to Work placement and transportation services for 18 months, the majority of them were employed in a Bridges to Work job for a shorter period. Data collected from the sites on participants who enrolled during the last nine months of the intake period indicate that only 30 percent of participants who obtained a Bridges job continued to work in the targeted suburbs and maintain contact with the program after three months; only 14 percent continued to do so after six months, ranging from 8 percent in Denver to 19 percent in Baltimore.

We examined whether participants' backgrounds or the characteristics of their Bridges jobs were related to retention in those jobs. However, only education was a significant predictor of retention in a Bridges job: participants who had no high school diploma or GED were less likely to stay in their Bridges jobs for at least three months. Hourly wages and immediate eligibility for health insurance were positively associated with job retention, while commuting for more than an hour was negatively so. However, the number of people in our sample is small and none of these results were statistically significant.

The Bridges staff believed there were many reasons why participants did not stay in their Bridges jobs, including being dissatisfied with the job itself, the shift or the pay. Some people took jobs at lower pay than they would have liked, hoping to advance, but then did not advance quickly enough. On average, starting hourly wages in Bridges jobs were only 20 cents greater than participants' average wages in their most recent jobs prior to applying to the program. Some participants decided they could not handle a second or third shift. Some had personal issues that made it difficult for them to keep a job, including housing, child care and health problems.

Staff also indicated that some participants were the only minority in their companies. According to the survey data, among participants who worked in a suburban job after coming to Bridges, almost half (49%) said all or most of the employees at their suburban jobs were a different race than themselves. In focus groups, black participants consistently expressed that they perceived that nonblack workers at their companies received better treatment than they did—that is, they were less likely to get in trouble for being late, were chosen for better jobs and were paid more. Whether or not this type of discrimination existed, some Bridges participants felt isolated at their Bridges jobs.

Conclusions

The Bridges programs recruited poor urban residents whom they believed could be placed in the suburban jobs they had developed. Most had a high school diploma or GED and some recent work experience, although the majority of participants were unemployed at the time they applied to Bridges. Just over half had previously looked for a job in the suburbs, and three quarters had recently traveled to the suburbs for shopping or entertainment. However, the majority (94%) did not have both a valid driver's license and everyday access to a car. Some participants faced other potential barriers to steady work: about 30 percent had a criminal record; one quarter had never held the same full-time job for at least one year; and 10 percent had children with special health-care needs. These factors would play a role in participants' ability to maintain employment and increase their earnings.

About two thirds of participants were ever placed in a Bridges job, but most used the Bridges services for only a short period of time. Participants' personal struggles and dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the Bridges jobs—coupled with the long commute—could explain why this was so. At the same time, the economy was growing and jobs were opening throughout the metropolitan areas. Staff reported that when they followed up with participants to see if they wanted help finding another Bridges job, many were working in jobs outside of the targeted suburban destination. While most participants' experience with Bridges was brief, the question to be addressed in the next chapter is whether this experience had the intended effect of increasing participants' employment and earnings by opening new opportunities to them.

The Impact of Participation in Bridges to Work

This chapter presents the estimated impact of Bridges to Work on participants across a variety of outcomes that denote success in the labor market and other areas of interest. Overall, there were few differences in outcomes for Bridges participants and the randomly selected control group, the notable exception being the availability of health insurance and other fringe benefits at their main jobs. The sections that follow summarize program impacts on such outcomes as employment, job characteristics, earnings and income, as well as the use of government-financed benefit programs, changes in residential location and deviant behavior.

Bridges to Work Impacts Overall and at Individual Sites

Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes

The primary goal of Bridges to Work was to improve the employment and earnings of low-income inner-city residents. The transportation and placement services provided by the sites represented a link to suburban jobs and expanded opportunities, which we expected would lead to improved short- and long-term employment outcomes. In this section we describe the extent to which Bridges participants met with success in the labor market, comparing their progress with that of individuals who were randomly assigned to a control group and did not have access to Bridges services.[9] We consider a range of employment goals, including participants' ability to:

- Obtain employment and increase the frequency of work;
- Improve earnings; and
- Access higher-quality jobs, as defined by hourly wages, the number of hours worked and the availability of health insurance and other fringe benefits.

Employment and Earnings

By expanding the job opportunities available to participants, Bridges to Work was expected to increase the probability that participants would obtain jobs and remain consistently employed. The majority of Bridges participants (93%) found jobs during the 18 months after they enrolled in Bridges. However, members of the control group had similar success in finding work (92%), and the slight difference between the groups is not statistically significant. The similarity between the two groups held for each of the six quarters after the date on which individuals were assigned to Bridges or the control group (Table 9). Although the proportion of Bridges participants who were employed in a given quarter increased from approximately 60 to 80 percent over the course of 18 months, the group that was not offered the Bridges services had similar increases in employment over time.[10]

Those who participated in Bridges were, on average, employed during 12 of the 18 months after they started the program, and slightly more than half (52%) worked more than 14 of 18 months (or three quarters of the period); but again there was no significant difference in consistency of work between those who did and did not have access to the Bridges services.

Bridges participants were more likely to report that they worked in the suburbs at some point during the 18 months after they joined the program than were members of the control group (59% versus 46%). However, participating in Bridges does not appear to have had the intended effect of significantly changing workers' employment trajectories. Only about one third (36%) of Bridges participants continued to work in the suburbs in the sixth quarter after applying to the program, compared to 28 percent of control group members.

Table 9

Bridges to Work Impacts on Participants' Ability to Obtain and Retain Employment

	Bridges Participants (n=917)	Control Group (n=896)	Difference (T-C)
Ever employed in the 18 months after random assignment	93.4%	91.6%	1.8%
Employed in each quarter after random assignment			
Quarter one	59.8%	58.4%	1.4%
Quarter two	67.5%	67.8%	–0.3%
Quarter three	71.7%	71.2%	0.5%
Quarter four	74.7%	74.0%	0.8%
Quarter five	78.3%	78.7%	–0.3%
Quarter six	82.0%	81.0%	1.0%
During the 18 months after random assignment:			
Average number of months employed	12.1	11.9	0.2
Employed during at least 14 of the 18 months	50.7%	51.1%	–0.4%
Had a suburban job	59.4%	46.0%	13.4%***

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the: *** 1-percent level. Differences may not equal the subtraction of the Bridges participant and control group figures shown due to rounding.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Bridges to Work was expected to lead to improved earnings among participants by increasing their ability to work more consistently and find better-paying jobs. During the quarter immediately following program enrollment, the Bridges participants earned more on average than did those in the control group. However, this difference did not persist in any of the following quarters, nor did it manifest itself in annual earnings (Table 10).[11]

Impacts by site. Employment and earnings varied somewhat across the four experimental sites, though there were largely no systematic differences between the Bridges participants and control group members (see Appendix B for tables by site). Bridges participants in Baltimore were more likely to have been employed and had greater earnings than did

controls ($2,150 versus $1,720) in the first quarter after random assignment. The experiences of Bridges participants in St. Louis were less favorable: they were less likely to be employed in the first and second quarters following random assignment and earned less than did the control group members in the second quarter ($1,620 versus $2,010). However, neither the differences in Baltimore nor St. Louis persisted into subsequent quarters. A greater proportion of Milwaukee Bridges participants than controls were employed in quarter six (82% versus 70%), but there is no other evidence of favorable employment outcomes. There were no significant site-level differences in the annual earnings of those who had access to Bridges services and those who did not.

Table 10
Bridges to Work Impacts on Earnings (2001 dollars)

	Bridges Participants (n=917)	Control Group (n=896)	Difference (T-C)
Earnings in each quarter after random assignment			
Quarter one	$ 1,934	$ 1,705	$ 229*
Quarter two	$ 2,247	$ 2,159	$ 88
Quarter three	$ 2,460	$ 2,388	$ 72
Quarter four	$ 2,657	$ 2,534	$ 123
Quarter five	$ 2,789	$ 2,736	$ 53
Quarter six	$ 2,840	$ 2,809	$ 31
Annual earnings in months 7 through 18 after random assignment	$ 11,100	$ 10,832	$ 269

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the * 10-percent level. Differences may not equal the subtraction of the Bridges participant and control group figures shown due to rounding.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

The Characteristics of Participants' Main Job

Bridges to Work was expected to help participants make better job matches and continue to have better jobs even after they left the program, because of their ability to search over a broader set of possibilities. Table 11 compares the characteristics of the main job—the one at which an individual worked the longest after coming to the program—held by Bridges participants and control group members. Average hourly wages among those who received Bridges services and the control group were $8.37 and $8.48, respectively, and the small difference is not statistically significant. There was no meaningful difference in the likelihood that people worked full-time—approximately 80 percent of each group did so—or in the average amount of time that they spent at their main jobs, which was one year for both groups.[12]

Although the jobs were similar in these respects, Bridges participants' main jobs were more likely to be located in the suburbs (a difference of 12 percentage points). Yet, the data reveal that almost a third of control group members were able to access jobs in the suburbs as well. While further analysis of the location of workers and jobs is needed to understand this finding, it may reflect the fact that suburban jobs were defined as any job in the metropolitan area located outside the central city, including those in inner-ring suburbs that may be a relatively short distance from some central-city neighborhoods.

Table 11

Bridges to Work Impacts on the Characteristics of Participants' Main Job After Random Assignment (of Those Who Were Employed)[13]

	Bridges Participants (n=856)	Control Group (n=821)	Difference (T-C)
Average hourly wage (2001 dollars)	$ 8.37	$ 8.48	–$ 0.12
Hourly wage was greater than $8.00	49.0%	49.2%	–0.1%
Worked full time	80.5%	79.8%	0.8%
Employer located in the suburbs	40.9%	29.3%	11.6%***
Average commute (minutes)	39	36	3**
Available benefits			
Health insurance	65.0%	56.3%	8.7%**
Dental insurance	53.4%	45.3%	8.1%***
Disability insurance	40.5%	34.4%	6.1%**
Life insurance	47.7%	38.3%	9.4%***
Pension/retirement plan	37.3%	32.0%	5.3%**
Sick leave	48.7%	42.8%	5.9%**
Paid vacation	60.7%	56.2%	4.5%*
Child-care assistance	13.1%	10.3%	2.9%*

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level. Differences may not equal the subtraction of the Bridges participant and control group figures shown due to rounding.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Somewhat surprisingly, the difference between the Bridges and control groups in average commuting time to a worker's main job was only three minutes (Table 11). One factor to consider in understanding this finding is that only 11 percent of Bridges participants' main jobs were jobs they commuted to using the Bridges transportation, and the average commute time among these Bridges jobs was 36 minutes, significantly less than the typical commute time among all Bridges jobs. This suggests that participants who remained in Bridges jobs were those who had shorter commutes.

While Bridges participants did not fare better in terms of hourly wages or full-time work, they were more successful on an important measure of job quality: the availability of health insurance and other fringe benefits. A greater proportion of those offered Bridges services had access to each of the nonwage benefits considered, including health insurance and dental benefits, disability and life insurance, pension and retirement plans, paid sick leave and vacation, and child-care assistance, with differences ranging from approximately 5 to 9 percentage points (Table 11).

Two factors appear to drive the difference in the availability of benefits. First, looking across all jobs held by both Bridges participants and those in the control group (including both the main job and any others), employers located in the suburbs were more likely to have offered health insurance than were those in central cities (62% versus 48%), and Bridges participants were more likely than those in the control group to work in the suburbs. It also appears that among the set of suburban workers, Bridges

participants had greater success in obtaining main jobs in which health insurance was available than did those in the control group with suburban jobs (74% versus 67%).

Impacts by site. There were no differences in wages or the likelihood of full-time work between those who received Bridges services and individuals in the control group at any of the four experimental sites. The pattern of increased availability of benefits was largely consistent across sites. A greater proportion of those who received Bridges services obtained jobs where health insurance was available than did those in the control group, though the difference was greatest, and statistically significant, in Denver and St. Louis (73% versus 61%, and 65% versus 51%, respectively). Additionally, twice the proportion of Denver Bridges participants had child-care assistance available from their main employer when compared with the control group (18% versus 9%). The availability of other benefits at individual sites followed a similar, though not always statistically significant, pattern as the overall group's.

Impacts on the Use of Government Assistance and Household Income

Participation in Bridges to Work may have affected participants in ways that are indirectly related to their employment experiences. To assess this, we looked at Bridges' impact on a variety of outcomes, including the use of government-funded benefit programs, total household income and poverty status at the time of the follow-up survey.

There were no statistically significant differences in the receipt of government assistance at the time of the follow-up interview, though both the Bridges and control groups continued to rely on these supports (Table 12). Four in 10 Bridges participants reported that they were living in public housing or renting a house or apartment using a Section 8 voucher; those in the control group did so in equal proportions. The use of these programs is consistent with the low household income observed in the month prior to the follow-up survey; approximately 50 percent of the overall sample had income below the federal poverty threshold. Bridges participants' total household income in the month prior to the follow-up survey was $146 greater than that of control group members, a statistically significant difference.[14] As a result, a slightly smaller proportion of Bridges participants were living in households in poverty than were members of the control group (50% versus 54%). The difference in household income between Bridges participants and controls was largely driven by differences in their respective households' earnings from work as opposed to government assistance or other income sources. Although Bridges participants' individual earnings were not statistically different than those of control group members, combining this income with that of other household members and considering a one-month time period reduces the variation in income and produces a statistically significant result.[15]

Table 12
Impacts on Receipt of Government Assistance, Household Income and Poverty

	Bridges Participants (n=917)	Control Group (n=896)	Difference (T-C)
Receipt of government assistance in the month before the follow-up survey			
AFDC/TANF	10.3%	9.9%	0.5%
Food stamps	21.5%	23.1%	–1.6%
Medicaid	21.7%	23.4%	–1.7%
Housing assistance	40.1%	37.5%	2.6%
Household income in the month before the follow-up survey			
Any income from work	81.4%	78.3%	3.1%
Total income in previous month	$ 1,766	$ 1,620	$ 146**
Income less than the poverty threshold	49.1%	53.2%	–4.1%*

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level. Differences may not equal the subtraction of the Bridges participant and control group figures shown due to rounding.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Impacts by site. There are no significant differences in the use of government benefits between Bridges participants and controls at the individual sites. Bridges participants' households had greater incomes and lower rates of poverty than did the households of control group members in Denver, Milwaukee and St. Louis, though the differences were statistically significant only in Milwaukee.

Impacts on Residential Outcomes

By serving as a link to suburban jobs, Bridges offered not only entrance into the suburban job market but also the potential to affect participants' residential decisions by exposing them to different housing markets and opportunities. In practice, however, there was little evidence of any indirect effect on the frequency or destination of moves or on attitudes about the desirability of living in the suburbs. There was also little to suggest that, relative to those who did not receive Bridges services, participants lived in higher-quality housing or less-dangerous neighborhoods.

More than half of Bridges participants and control group members moved during the 18 months after entering the initiative, with no significant difference between the two groups (Table 13). Just over 1 in 10 individuals in the overall sample lived in the suburbs in the period since random assignment, with the small difference between the Bridges and control groups not statistically significant. Control group members were slightly more willing to consider moving during the year and a half after their follow-up interview; but among those who would consider moving, there was no difference in the percent that would consider moving to the suburbs.[16]

Table 13
Bridges to Work Impacts on Residential Outcomes

	Bridges Participants (n=917)	Control Group (n=896)	Difference (T-C)
Moved during the 18 months after random assignment	58.1%	59.8%	–1.6%
Ever lived in the suburbs since random assignment	12.2%	14.1%	–1.9%
Would consider moving in the next 18 months	68.4%	72.7%	–4.3%**
Would consider moving to the suburbs	25.6%	26.3%	–0.7%
Felt not very or not at all safe in neighborhood	9.0%	11.1%	–2.1%
Rated housing as being in fair/poor condition	31.0%	33.9%	–3.0%

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the ** 5-percent level. Differences may not equal the subtraction of the Bridges participant and control group figures shown due to rounding.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

By improving earnings, we expected that Bridges to Work might change participants' ability to afford better housing or move to a better neighborhood. However, Bridges did not result in these outcomes as measured by individuals' ratings of the condition of their home and the safety of their neighborhood. Nearly one in six people in the overall sample reported living in an unsafe neighborhood, and there was no significant difference in the perception of safety between Bridges participants and the control group. About one third of Bridges and control group members considered their current residence to be in fair or poor condition, with the three-percentage-point difference in means (31% versus 34%) not statistically significant.

Impacts by site. The Bridges participants' views about the desirability of living in the suburbs and the quality of their living situation generally did not differ from those of controls at individual sites. While there were no differences between the Bridges and control groups, the proportion of the overall sample who ever lived in the suburbs after random assignment varied by site from 6 percent in Milwaukee and 7 percent in Baltimore to 15 percent in St. Louis and 23 percent in Denver.

Bridges to Work Impacts for Subgroups of Participants

We examined the outcomes of interest for subgroups of participants whose characteristics may have made them particularly likely to benefit from (or be hindered by) the Bridges services. To the extent that impacts among subgroups differ from the overall impact, we can learn lessons about the types of people who are particularly well (or poorly) suited to such a program. For example, we believed that participants with recent work experience would be better prepared for finding and keeping a suburban job and, thus, would benefit from Bridges services more than others would. On the other hand, we believed that participants with young children would have more difficulty with the commute to the suburbs, due to their child-care needs. In addition to these groups, we examined the Bridges impacts for individuals in households receiving TANF when they applied to the program, for racial and educational subgroups, for people with prior criminal convictions, and for single-parent house-

holds with children under age 18 (see Appendix B for tables for key subgroups). The results for the subgroups did not differ considerably from those for the overall sample, with the following exceptions.

TANF recipients and other single parents. Among individuals receiving TANF at the time of application, those who were offered Bridges services earned higher hourly wages at their main job than did their counterparts in the control group ($8.75 vs. $7.48) and were more likely to have sick leave and child-care assistance available through their employer. They were much more likely to work in the suburbs than were those in the control group (59% versus 42%) and more likely than controls to have moved to the suburbs or to say they would consider moving there in the future (33% versus 21%), with much of this difference stemming from the greater proportion who actually resided in the suburbs (14% versus 6%).

Despite these differences, the Bridges participants who were receiving TANF did not work significantly more than the controls, and while their overall earnings were greater than those of control group members, the differences were not statistically significant. The lack of statistical significance in the earnings differences could be due to the small number of people in this group (only 15 percent of the total sample) and to the great variation in earnings that results partly from individuals who did not work and thus had zero earnings. We expanded the sample by looking at participants whose households had received TANF during the month prior to application and reduced the variation by limiting the analysis to individuals who ever worked during the 18 months after random assignment. Among TANF recipients who worked during the 18 months after coming to the program, those who were offered Bridges services had greater hourly wages (an average of 98 cents more) than did members of the control group, which translated into a statistically significant difference in annual earnings of $1,826.

Bridges participants who were the heads of single-parent households also had greater earnings than their counterparts in the control group, although once again our sample is small and these differences were not statistically significant. Most of the single parents had previously received TANF, even if they were not doing so at the time they applied to Bridges. We grouped the current TANF recipients with these single parents and found that while participants in this group did not work more consistently than did control group members, they earned an average of 74 cents per hour more than controls at their main job, translating into greater earnings in the fourth through sixth quarters after random assignment. These differences manifested in a statistically significant difference in annual earnings of $1,401. Bridges participants in this group were more likely to have health insurance, sick leave and child-care assistance available at their main job. They were also less likely than control group members to be working in temporary jobs or in jobs in retail trade and private services, and were more likely to work in jobs in manufacturing and health services. Finally, the Bridges participants in recent TANF and single-parent households contributed to the differences found in the overall sample in total monthly household income, though the differences observed within the TANF group or combined TANF and single-parent groups were not statistically significant.

Interestingly, TANF recipients and single parents were not more likely than others to obtain a Bridges job or to retain their Bridges job for longer periods of time. In fact, the data suggest that they left their Bridges jobs more quickly than did other participants. These findings suggest that the benefit of Bridges was not necessarily the Bridges

job itself. Members of the combined TANF and single-parent household group had somewhat less recent work experience and less consistent work in the past than other Bridges applicants and may have benefited more so than others from the information the sites provided about searching for and accessing employment in the suburbs, or from the additional work experience.

Individuals with recent work experience. Bridges participants who had worked in the six months prior to coming to the program were more likely to be employed in the first and second quarters after random assignment and had greater earnings in the first quarter than did controls with similar work experience. However, these differences did not carry over to any of the later quarters. Bridges participants with recent work experience were also less likely to receive food stamps at the time of the follow-up (a difference of approximately four percentage points).

Individuals with preschool-age children. Bridges participants with children under the age of six were less likely than controls to receive TANF or food stamps at the time of the follow-up survey (a difference of seven to eight percentage points) and were less likely to live in households with income below the poverty line (54% versus 66%). Despite these findings, participants with young children did not appear to fare better in terms of their labor market outcomes.

Other Factors Associated with Participants' Outcomes

We examined the impact of factors other than participation in Bridges to Work that might have influenced participants' outcomes. Doing so contributes to an understanding of what factors predict success in the labor market among certain low-income groups.[17] We examined the effects of individuals' preprogram characteristics, including age, gender, race, education, marital status, work limitations, preprogram work experience, criminal history and the presence of young children, children with health limitations and children who are not in school or child-care settings. For more information on the methodology, see Appendix A; the main findings follow.

Consistent with expectations, education and previous work experience played an important role in participants' ability to maintain employment and earn greater income. The multivariate analysis suggests that those who had education beyond a high school diploma, those who had ever held a full-time job for more than a year and those who had some work in the six months before applying to Bridges worked more consistently and had greater earnings during the 18 months after random assignment. These participants were also less likely to live in households receiving TANF or in households with income below the poverty line at the time of the follow-up.

A number of other factors in addition to education and work history influenced employment and well-being. Male participants were more likely to work full-time and had greater hourly wages and considerably greater annual earnings than did female participants. Males were also less likely to receive the various forms of public assistance or to live in poor households. Older workers were less likely to work full-time at their main job or to have health benefits available at this job; they also had lower quarterly and annual earnings. Participants who had children under the age of six had greater earnings, while parents of children not in formal child care or school were less likely to

work full-time and had lower earnings. Consistent with Medicaid eligibility guidelines, those who reported having a work limitation or who were living with a young child were more likely to live in households receiving Medicaid.

Individuals who had criminal records prior to applying to Bridges had lower quarterly and annual earnings and were more likely to receive government benefits. Having a valid driver's license before being randomly assigned to the Bridges or control group was associated with greater hourly wages and annual earnings, greater household income and a smaller likelihood of receiving government assistance or of living in a household with income below the poverty line.

A number of factors were associated with working in the suburbs. Participants who were married when they applied to Bridges were less likely to work in the suburbs, while those who had a valid driver's license were more likely to do so, although this latter difference did not quite reach statistical significance. Both those who had a post-high-school degree and those who had no degree were less likely to work in the suburbs than were those whose highest degree was a GED or high school diploma. This finding, coupled with the greater earnings found among those with a postsecondary degree, suggest that these individuals were better able to access higher-paying jobs in the central cities.

Summary of the Impacts of Bridges to Work

Bridges to Work connected about two thirds of participants with jobs in the suburbs. While participants could have used the Bridges services for 18 months, only 30 percent did so beyond three months. The exposure to the suburban labor market may have expanded participants' opportunities, but, given their short stay in the program, it is not surprising that there were few differences in outcomes for Bridges participants and the control group—the availability of health insurance and other fringe benefits being a notable exception. To review, there was a positive and statistically significant difference between those who received Bridges services and the control group for the following outcomes:

- Working in the suburbs during the 18 months after coming to the program;
- Earnings in the first quarter following random assignment;
- Having fringe benefits available at the main job, including health and dental benefits, life and disability insurance, pensions and retirement plans, paid vacation and sick leave, and child-care assistance;
- The length of time spent commuting to the main job, though the difference of three minutes is of marginal practical significance; and
- Total household income and the proportion of households with income below the federal poverty threshold in the month prior to the follow-up survey.

The other significant findings were those involving current TANF recipients and single parents, most of whom had received TANF at some time. While Bridges did

not help these participants work more consistently, it did enable them to obtain better-paying jobs than they would have had without the Bridges services and, in turn, to attain greater annual earnings. Participants in these subgroups drove the significant differences seen in the overall sample in household income and the proportion of households with income below the poverty line. These findings seem somewhat counterintuitive, as both we and the program staff suspected that Bridges was not the answer for former welfare recipients who had limited recent work experience and potential child-care concerns. But the findings suggest that TANF recipients and other single parents living in central cities and trying to support a family are more likely than others to benefit from a mobility strategy.

The results of the Bridges to Work demonstration should be considered in conjunction with the findings from other efforts to resolve the mismatch between the location of jobs and the location of unemployed workers. A study of the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration found that offering families housing vouchers to move to neighborhoods with lower poverty rates did not lead to increased employment or earnings for these families (Kling, Liebman, Katz et al. 2004). An interim assessment of the Empowerment Zones (EZ) program found mixed results: while employment grew in five of the six EZs, increases in employment were only correlated with EZ program activities in three of the six sites, and the upturn in the economy during the period studied makes it difficult to attribute employment growth to the initiative (Hebert, Vidal, Mills et al. 2001).

Outcomes for Participants in Chicago

As the scale site, Chicago was expected to enroll a minimum of 1,500 participants over a three-year period, without the constraints of random assignment, to test whether the program could identify enough employers and adapt its transportation strategy to operate on a large scale. However, due to low enrollment and high attrition, the demonstration did not offer a true test of operating at scale. Over a 40-month period, from late 1996 to early 2000, Chicago Bridges to Work enrolled 845 participants. The program placed 72 percent of these participants in jobs in the targeted suburbs, with an average hourly wage of $7.48. As elsewhere, most participants in Chicago used Bridges' services for a short time: 31 percent continued to work in a Bridges job and maintain contact with the program three months after placement, and only 18 percent did so six months after placement.

We surveyed 260 Chicago participants who enrolled during the same time as those at the other sites to learn what their experiences were after coming to Bridges. The Chicago participants resemble those in Milwaukee: almost two thirds (62%) were male, 96 percent were African American and, on average, they were 34 years old. One third of participants did not have a high school diploma or GED. About 6 in 10 had worked full-time in the year prior to applying to Bridges, though only 2 percent were working when they applied. About one third had ever received AFDC or TANF, and 21 percent said they had been convicted of a crime.

The Chicago participants did not fare quite as well as those at the experimental sites in terms of employment, although their earnings were similar. Eighty-two percent of the Chicago participants were employed at some time during the 18 months after program enrollment. The proportion of participants employed in any one quarter remained at about 62 percent and, on average, participants were employed during 10 of the 18 months after enrollment. Despite the lower rates of employment, Chicago participants' earnings were similar to those at the other sites; quarterly earnings increased from $2,164 in the first quarter to $2,247 in the sixth quarter, and average annual earnings were $12,458. About two thirds of Chicago participants worked in the suburbs during the 18-month period, a somewhat higher rate than that found elsewhere. At their main job during the 18 months after enrolling in Bridges, participants earned an average of $8.31 per hour, and 65 percent had medical benefits available.

The Chicago participants continued to rely on government assistance at rates similar to those at the other sites. Twelve percent of participants' households in Chicago received TANF in the month prior to the follow-up survey and 35 percent were living in public or subsidized housing. Average household income in the previous month was $1,979, and 58 percent of participants' households were living below the poverty line.

In terms of residential preferences, Chicago participants looked similar to the others. Only seven percent had lived in the suburbs during the follow-up period. Almost two thirds (65%) said they would consider moving, but only one quarter of these participants said they would consider moving to the suburbs. Six percent said they did not feel safe in the neighborhood where they lived.

We did not have a control group against which to compare the Bridges participants' experiences in Chicago. However, the similarity of the Chicago participants' characteristics and outcomes to those of individuals at the experimental sites suggests that the impacts of Bridges to Work in Chicago, if measured, would have been similar to those in the other sites.

The Costs of Bridges to Work

Understanding the costs of operating an employment and transportation program is critical to policymakers and public or private agencies interested in connecting inner-city residents to the suburban labor market. In this chapter, we consider the costs of the major components of Bridges to Work with a focus on the transportation services, which primarily drove the overall program expenditures. The costs presented do not include the costs of planning Bridges to Work. Program operations during the four-year demonstration cost a total of $12,306,664 across the five sites. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided 58 percent of the funding for the demonstration; the sites raised the balance of funds through local matching grants, in-kind resources and revenues. The proportion of expenditures covered by funding from HUD ranged from 40 percent in Chicago to 80 percent in Denver.

Table 14
Annual Net Costs of the Bridges to Work Services

	Random Assignment Sites		Chicago (Scale Site)
	Average	Range	
Recruitment and intake	$ 85,963	$24,838 – $139,244	$ 144,603
Job placement and retention	$ 68,392	$45,976 – $92,886	$ 140,482
Transportation	$ 248,785	$134,211 – $493,071	$ 371,262
Project management	$ 143,294	$103,903 – $176,359	$ 291,867
Total annual net cost	$ 546,433	$393,370 – $827,838	$ 948,215

Source: P/PV analysis of cost data submitted by the sites. Totals may not equal the sum of the figures shown due to rounding.

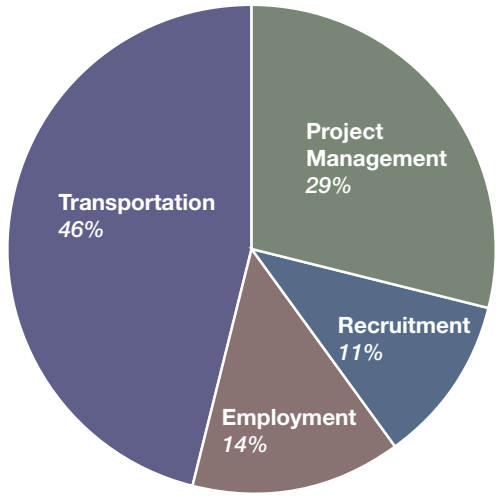
Across the four random assignment sites, the total annual net cost of Bridges to Work ranged from a low of $393,370 to a high of $827,838; at Chicago, where the goal was to implement the program at scale without random assignment, the total annual net cost was $948,215 (Table 14).[18] The cost per enrollee averaged $6,739 across the experimental sites and $4,612 in Chicago.[19] Not all treatment group members enrolled received the Bridges to Work services and, as noted earlier in the report, 36 percent were never placed in a Bridges job. The costs of services for Bridges participants who obtained jobs and rode the transportation to their jobs would be greater than the costs for participants who enrolled but never received services or who received assistance with their job search but were never placed.

The costs of operating Bridges to Work included recruiting and screening applicants, providing transportation and employment services, and project management and administration. The total costs reported include both cash expenditures and the redirected contributions of the programs and their partner agencies, including such items as the value of staff time; the use of vehicles, other equipment or office space;

and discounts on public transit passes. As illustrated in Figure 1, the transportation services drove the costs of the programs, accounting for 46 percent of expenditures across the five sites.

Figure 1

Average Distribution of Bridges to Work Program Costs



Recruitment and intake activities accounted for 11 percent of expenditures and included staff time, marketing and advertising expenses, and referral incentives. Staff time made up the majority of recruitment costs at all sites except Denver, where advertising and marketing accounted for 59 percent of the program's expenditures on recruitment. Denver invested greater resources than did other sites in advertising on television and radio. The costs of recruitment and intake averaged $428 per enrollee across all five sites, ranging from a low of $118 in St. Louis to a high of $579 in Denver.[20]

The costs of job placement and retention services accounted for 14 percent of all costs and consisted primarily of staff time spent identifying job openings, working with participants to match them with jobs, and following up with participants after placement. Baltimore and Denver also had expenditures for job placement and retention incentives (about 12 to 15 percent of their employment services costs, respectively).

Understanding the Transportation Costs

As indicated in Table 15, there was great variation in annual transportation costs across the five sites. The primary expenditures for transportation services included project staff time, vehicle operation, maintenance and insurance costs, and in some cases the costs of subsidizing participants' use of public transportation. Program staff at all sites spent time coordinating transportation to interviews and jobs, and communicating with the transit providers to arrange participants' rides.

Baltimore Bridges, which had the highest transportation expenses of all five sites, purchased its own 14-passenger vans and then contracted with a private transit provider for van drivers, gasoline, insurance and maintenance.[21] The site paid the provider a flat rate of $201 per van per 10-hour shift. The service was available 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the entire demonstration period and was used to take participants to employers during their job search, to transport them to their jobs and for emergency rides home. When operating at scale, the site estimated that the costs of the transportation service averaged about $10 per rider per one-way trip.

Table 15
Bridges to Work Annual Net Transportation Expenditures

	Baltimore	Denver	Milwaukee	St. Louis	Chicago
Annual transportation costs	$493,071	$134,211	$185,074	$182,784	$371,262
Cost breakdown (%)					
Van/shuttle service provider costs	85%	28%	63%	74%	8%
Large bus service provider costs	0%	31%	0%	0%	69%
Other vehicle purchase or lease	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Staff salaries and fringes	6%	20%	32%	14%	23%
Transportation subsidies	0%	13%	.3%	1%	0%
Other costs	0%	4%	5%	11%	0%

Denver Bridges, the site that relied most heavily on public fixed-route buses, had the lowest expenditures on transportation services. Early in the initiative, Denver incurred expenses related to expanding the public fixed-route bus service to the targeted suburbs, for which the site provided participants with monthly bus passes. According to data from the site, the transportation subsidy expenditures covered 1,238 monthly bus passes and 2,955 single-use bus coupons. Throughout the intake period, Denver Bridges also leased a vehicle that a staff person drove to take participants to job interviews and to fill out applications. For a time, the site offered more flexible van service through two transit providers, which charged $12 and $15, respectively, per rider per one-way trip. While this service was operating, the program scheduled 6,394 trips. During the last 18 months of the demonstration, Denver was not able to secure a contract for shuttle services, and transportation services were limited to providing participants monthly bus passes and information about schedules.

Milwaukee Bridges worked with a single transit provider for its van service for the first two years of the demonstration. The provider charged $29 per hour per van for the service rather than a per-person charge. The costs of the transit provider's services broke down as follows: 38 percent was for vehicle lease/purchase payments, 38 percent for vehicle maintenance and operating costs, 16 percent for the transportation coordinator and 8 percent for insurance. Once the number of riders decreased after the end of the intake period, Milwaukee Bridges worked with two small-van service providers that could run two to three vans at a time and charged $13 to $14 per person per one-way trip. St. Louis also contracted with a transit provider for van service to the suburban employers from a hub at the edge of the city. The provider charged the program $2.30

per van mile regardless of the number of riders and did not charge for return trips when there were no passengers.

Chicago maintained and operated its own large buses for most of the demonstration period.[22] Halfway through the demonstration, the site began to supplement the bus service with 14-passenger vans that program staff drove to take participants from the Bridges office to their employers. Six months before the end of the demonstration, Chicago terminated the large-bus and circulator-van service due to the high cost of vehicle maintenance, and the remaining participants transferred to public transportation routes.

Conclusions

Bridges to Work transportation services were very costly for a nonprofit service or planning agency to provide and were difficult to sustain. Once the demonstration ended, both Denver and Milwaukee stopped providing transportation services, and Chicago terminated its service prior to the demonstration's end. Baltimore continued to raise funds for transportation and provided this service for about six months after the demonstration before deciding to eliminate the service due to the cost, transferring riders to multiple transit providers in the city. St. Louis used its remaining HUD funding and new surface transportation policy funds to continue a Bridges-type program in a different suburban area that was more accessible to city residents.

Lessons Learned

The Bridges to Work demonstration offers a number of lessons to policymakers and others seeking to link low-income, inner-city workers to jobs. Bridges to Work was an important model to test, as it touched on several relevant barriers confronting low-income, inner-city job seekers, including a lack of information about job openings, a lack of resources to conduct a suburban job search and a lack of transportation to access growing job opportunities in the suburbs.

The experience of the individuals who participated in Bridges to Work demonstrates the challenges poor inner-city residents face as they attempt to access jobs, retain employment and increase their earnings. Even during a period of strong economic growth, study participants were unemployed, on average, during a third of the 18 months after they applied to Bridges and their earnings were low. Half of participants lived in households with income below the poverty line at the end of the study period. Our analysis reveals that having greater mobility (defined as having a valid driver's license) was associated with having greater hourly wages and earnings, greater household income and less dependence on public assistance. Yet, at the time of the 18-month follow-up, fewer than half (46%) of all study participants had a valid driver's license and only 27 percent had both a license and daily use of a car. To reach their current or most recent jobs at the time of the follow-up survey, 63 percent of all workers used public transportation;[23] only a quarter of workers drove their own vehicles to work. The need for intervention to help poor inner-city residents access and retain well-paying jobs is apparent.

Despite this need, the experience and results of the demonstration make clear that the Bridges to Work model is not a viable policy response to the mismatch between the location of jobs and the location of unemployed workers. Bridges to Work was expected to increase participants' likelihood of working consistently, earning more and accessing better jobs even after they left their Bridges jobs due to the expanded employment opportunities the program provided. However, Bridges did not make a difference in how consistently individuals were employed or result in higher hourly wages and annual earnings. These results were consistent across the cities in which Bridges was implemented and across a variety of strategies for providing transportation services, including the use of flexible van service to either supplement or replace existing public transportation lines and the expansion of fixed-route bus service. Even in the site with the most flexible van service—available 24 hours a day, seven days a week—Bridges did not increase participants' employment or earnings over those of their counterparts in the control group.

We believe that the lack of results was not due to poor implementation but to shortcomings in the Bridges to Work concept. The Bridges programs implemented the transportation strategies, identified job openings and employers willing to hire participants, and placed two thirds of the individuals enrolled in the program in jobs in the targeted suburbs. While the programs needed time to evaluate and adjust their recruitment strategies, transportation systems and job development efforts, the data reveal

that the results did not improve for later cohorts of participants. Given the implementation challenges and costs, we do not believe that further efforts to improve the capacity of the organizations to implement the Bridges model would produce different results. While the results of the Bridges to Work demonstration do not point to clear strategies for successfully resolving the jobs-workers mismatch, the experience revealed a number of pitfalls the sites encountered when implementing the Bridges model, which can inform future policy and programming.

1) The Bridges model assumed that a reasonable commute from central cities to distant suburbs using multipassenger vans or buses was feasible. This assumption was based on the concept that the programs would be able to recruit a significant number of applicants from a geographically small area of the city and place them in jobs in a small employer base in the suburbs. While the Bridges to Work sites were successful in implementing transportation services that created increased access to the targeted suburban employment areas, the programs faced great challenges in providing participants a sustainable journey to work. Recruitment challenges meant the programs had to expand the geographic areas they targeted for outreach, which resulted in more pickup points and longer distances for participants to travel to get to these points. Some participants had to use public transit to get to and from the Bridges pickup points, adding a transfer and extra time. The programs also had to work with many employers who had varying shifts and often hired only one or two participants, resulting in multiple stops in the suburbs and frequent waits before or after a shift. Given the long distances involved, the commute Bridges to Work offered was not sustainable.

2) The wages or other benefits did not justify the commute for most participants. The suburban jobs held by workers in the demonstration paid only 36 cents per hour more, on average, than did the jobs workers in the city held. Participants' door-to-door commutes to the Bridges jobs were often more than an hour long, including multiple segments and time lapses before or after a shift. In *Overcoming Roadblocks* (Elliott, Palubinsky, Tierney 1999) the authors posed the question of what is a reasonable amount of time spent commuting or waiting before or after a shift. Given the low retention in Bridges jobs, the commute and the wait were apparently too great, at least with the economy growing and the relative availability of jobs that paid similar wages but had an easier commute. The survey data reveal that although participants left their Bridges jobs quickly, most continued to work and at increasing rates over time. Bridges participants' subsequent jobs had commute times that were significantly lower than those for their Bridges jobs and mirrored those of control group members, with a median commute time of 30 minutes among the jobs participants held in the sixth quarter after enrollment. The differential in wages and benefits that Bridges offered was not enough to compensate for the time and complexity of the commute.

3) The Bridges to Work model could not easily respond to changes in the economy. After selecting their target areas and developing cross-jurisdictional partnerships among employment and transportation agencies, the Bridges program operators did not have the flexibility to change their strategies to target other areas—they had to work with the suburban locations they had chosen at a time when these areas were growing while other areas were stagnant. During the demonstration, the economy changed considerably, and while job growth continued to be greatest in the suburbs, low-income workers (as evidenced by the experience of the control group) were able

to find jobs on their own, typically in the central city. The changes in the economy reduced demand for Bridges services, making it harder to provide cost-effective services. The Bridges experience demonstrates the difficulty of designing programs based on observed economic trends (which can often change by the time programs are implemented) and the need to build flexibility into mobility strategies.

4) The Bridges to Work model assumed that there would be a large pool of individuals who were ready to work—that is, they had the ability to obtain and retain a job—but lacked only access to information about job openings and transportation to jobs in the suburbs. The Bridges experience suggests that unemployed inner-city residents who are unable to access employment on their own face barriers beyond transportation and information. Participants required assistance preparing for their job search as well as assistance dealing with personal and workplace issues once on the job. Certainly, the strong economy may have enabled many of the work-ready individuals sought by Bridges to find jobs on their own, but we are not convinced that large numbers of work-ready job seekers would have been present or would have sought Bridges services if the economy had been weak. The requirement that the sites focus on job-ready individuals had two significant consequences:

   - The original model did not include job preparation and retention services, and the assistance the sites eventually added was too weak to address the needs of the population Bridges served. The costs of recruitment and transportation services prevented the sites from putting more resources into job preparation and retention.

   - The Bridges programs screened out hundreds of applicants who did not meet the criteria of being job-ready, including many of those who did not have a high school diploma or GED or recent work experience. Program operators were also leery of accepting many welfare recipients, one group which in hindsight appears to have benefited more than others from the program. The difficulty of identifying "qualified" applicants contributed to the sites' recruitment problems, which in turn had significant consequences for the transportation services.

5) Bridges to Work demonstrates that transportation service that is responsive to the needs of workers and employers is expensive and impractical for a single nonprofit service provider to maintain. The Bridges programs that contracted for demand-responsive shuttle service found that the costs were high and the service difficult to maintain due to the small number of riders on each trip. At one point, Milwaukee averaged 30 one-way van trips per day with less than two people in each van, making the trips cost-prohibitive. Denver could not secure shuttle service for the last 18 months of the demonstration because the number of riders who would be on the van would not cover the costs of the trip for the provider. In Chicago, where the program could operate at scale without the constraints of random assignment, the transportation service was not able to operate any more efficiently and the site terminated it. The Bridges experience suggests that a single service organization cannot efficiently operate a transportation program because it alone cannot supply enough riders or continue to raise the necessary funding for operation and maintenance costs. While a single service agency will find it difficult to achieve the required scale, a citywide or regional effort may be better equipped to do so.

In conclusion, the Bridges to Work model did not produce a sustainable journey to work due to the complexities of providing services that met the needs of workers and employers, the costs to providers of operating the transit services and the costs to the workers in time spent commuting. However, the lessons from the Bridges experience should not be interpreted as diminishing the importance of improving transportation options for low-income job seekers in order to increase their access to employment opportunities. The demonstration shows only that this particular model for doing so was not successful. The low-income urban residents in the study relied heavily on public transportation to reach their jobs, yet the findings suggest that having greater mobility—in the form of a valid driver's license—is associated with having greater wages and annual earnings. Nevertheless, the Bridges experience demonstrates that the wages and benefits available at the jobs targeted by mobility efforts must justify the costs in time and complexity to program participants.

Endnotes

1 See Hughes (1993) for a discussion of the pros and cons of each strategy.

2 These dates coincide with enrollment dates at the Milwaukee Bridges site.

3 More in-depth information about lessons learned from the implementation of Bridges to Work can be found in previous P/PV reports: *Overcoming Roadblocks on the Way to Work* and *In the Driver's Seat*.

4 For a discussion of these recruitment strategies and the challenges the programs faced, see *Overcoming Roadblocks on the Way to Work*.

5 Chicago's original model included a four-day orientation during which applicants took part in job preparation activities.

6 At the experimental sites, 58 percent of Bridges employers responded to the survey; at Chicago, 37 percent did so.

7 The data are based on extensive interviews we conducted with applicants at the time they applied to Bridges. We did not conduct these interviews with participants in Chicago, the scale site. Information about the background characteristics and program experiences of participants in Chicago is included in the textbox in Chapter 4.

8 "Full-time" is defined as 35 hours or more per week.

9 Our primary interest is in the added value associated with participating in Bridges to Work relative to the experiences participants would have otherwise had, which may have included participating in other programs. We investigated the extent to which the control group took advantage of other employment and training programs, and found that 17 percent of the control group participated in employment or training programs other than Bridges to Work, a proportion not statistically different from the 15 percent of Bridges participants who did so.

10 An error in survey administration resulted in the loss of employment information for some participants who reported obtaining four or more jobs after random assignment. For these individuals, we have complete information only on their most recent three jobs, suggesting that employment rates in early quarters may be artificially low. There is no statistically significant difference between the proportion of Bridges participants and those in the control group who are affected by this error.

We computed employment rates and earnings among the group of participants for whom we have complete job information, those who reported having three or fewer jobs, and again find no statistically significant differences between employment of Bridges participants and those in the control group, though employment rates in quarters one and two are approximately two percentage points higher for each group. We describe this problem in greater detail in Appendix A.

11 We again computed earnings among those who reported having fewer than four jobs and found no difference in statistical significance; the earnings differential between the Bridges and control groups in the first quarter remains positive and statistically significant, and there are no measurable differences in subsequent quarters.

12 Additionally, the average starting dates of participants' and control group members' main jobs were within two weeks of one another.

13 The main job is the one at which an individual worked for the longest amount of time during the 18 months after random assignment.

14 Note that although the difference in households receiving some income from work is not statistically significant at conventional levels, it is statistically significant at the 15-percent level.

15 The reduction in the variation in income is largely due to the lower number of zero earners. We cannot determine which household member's income is driving the differences. We caution the reader that the quarterly individual earnings are for the 18 months post-random assignment whereas the monthly household income is for the month prior to completion of the follow-up survey, which occurred 21 months after random assignment, on average.

16 We also considered the union of these two measures—whether an individual lived, or would consider living, in the suburbs—and again found no difference between those eligible to receive Bridges services and the control group.

17 The multivariate approach also allows us to control for differences that may have been present in the post-random assignment samples when examining the impacts of Bridges to Work participation. We compared characteristics of Bridges participants with those of the control group at baseline and found no statistically significant differences among variables that we viewed as being of key importance, including race, age, marital status and work experience as measured by recent work or full-time work experience of more than one year. Bridges participants had a greater, and statistically significant, likelihood of having other adults in their household and, on average, had fewer children. We estimated models, controlling for these variables, and found no difference in the statistical significance of the relationship between participating in Bridges and the program outcome measures of interest.

18 The transportation costs presented in Tables 14 and 15 are net costs. Because some individuals in the treatment group would have used public transportation in the absence of Bridges to Work, the program offset public expenditures on transportation. We use public transportation ridership among the control group to estimate the amount participants would have used in the absence of Bridges, and find an annual amount of approximately $27,246 in offset public transportation costs at the experimental sites and $26,499 in Chicago. City-level estimates of the public cost per trip of public transportation were obtained from the American Public Transportation Association. Net costs are valuable in understanding the program's costs from a societal perspective. Program operators interested in the gross costs of operating Bridges to Work should add the offset transportation costs to the total annual net costs.

19 To calculate the cost per enrollee, we divided the recruitment and intake costs by the total number of treatment and control group members and all other costs by the number of treatment group members only.

20 The recruitment and intake costs per enrollee include both treatment and control group members at the random assignment sites.

21 Following IRS standards, the vans Baltimore purchased were depreciated using a double declining balance system with a five-year recovery period.

22 The value of the buses and the costs of their maintenance, storage and other related costs were reported as a single redirected contribution made by SJL. Therefore, we cannot separate out the value of the buses and must assume the buses were depreciated in the cost data provided by the site.

23 Includes a small percentage of individuals who said they took Bridges transportation to their most recent job.

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Appendix A: Research Methodology

Baseline and Follow-Up Survey Data Collection Processes

The estimates that we present in this summary are based on survey data collected at two points in time by Abt Associates Inc. using a computer-assigned telephone interview (CATI) system. The first, or baseline, survey was designed to obtain information about individuals' demographic characteristics and preprogram employment experiences, use of government benefit programs, living environment, perceptions of the suburbs, and other factors potentially related to demonstration outcomes. Individuals were interviewed usually within days of being enrolled in the program, and all interviews were conducted by telephone. The baseline survey began in June 1997 and continued through August 1999. Of the 2,410 eligible applicants, 2,360 completed the baseline survey, a response rate of 98 percent. The denominator does not include 94 individuals who had been suspended by the program or reported that they were no longer interested in the program when they were reached for the baseline interview. Including these individuals in the denominator reduces the response rate to 94 percent.

The second, or follow-up, survey effort sought to document participants' experiences in the 18 months immediately following random assignment, and contained questions about a variety of experiences, including employment, living arrangements, use of transportation and satisfaction with the Bridges to Work program during this period. The follow-up survey, which began in January 1999 and concluded during January 2002, was conducted both by telephone (73%) and in person (27%). In total, 1,819 of the 2,360 baseline survey completers also finished the follow-up survey, a response rate of 77 percent. The response rates for members of the treatment and control groups were almost identical at 78 percent and 77 percent, respectively. Table A1 presents a breakdown of the study sample by site and treatment status. On average, follow-up interviews were conducted 21 months after random assignment. For eight participants, follow-up interviews were conducted 16 months following random assignment, and another 94 (5%) had their follow-up interviews 30 or more months after random assignment.

Table A1. The Bridges to Work Demonstration Research Sample

	Randomly Assigned			In the Analysis Sample		
	Treatment	Control	All	Treatment	Control	All
Baltimore	331	328	659	281	276	557
				(84.9%)	(84.1%)	(84.5%)
Denver	310	311	621	238	227	465
				(76.8%)	(73.0%)	(74.9%)
Milwaukee	268	267	535	201	185	386
				(75.0%)	(69.3%)	(72.1%)
St. Louis	273	272	545	197	214	411
				(72.2%)	(78.7%)	(75.4%)
All experimental sites	1,182	1,178	2,360	917	902	1,819
				(77.6%)	(76.6%)	(77.1%)

Note: Participants in the analysis sample are those who completed both the baseline and 18-month follow-up surveys. Percentages are of the total number randomly assigned to each group.

Loss of Data on Some Individuals Who Worked at Four or More Jobs after Random Assignment

The follow-up survey was designed to collect information about all jobs that individuals had since the date of random assignment. An error in survey data collection resulted in the loss of information on all but the most recent three jobs for the 322 individuals (approximately 18 percent of the sample) who reported having four or more jobs since the date of random assignment. Of these 322 individuals, 83 percent reported having either four (n=178) or five (n=88) jobs. Abt Associates attempted to correct this error by recontacting respondents and was able to retrieve complete information for 26 of these cases.

Because the survey instrument collects information on jobs as ordered from most recent to most distant, we lose information on individuals' early jobs as a result of this problem. By using the job start and stop dates for the most recent three jobs to estimate the quarters in which we lack employment information, we calculate that the proportion of the sample with complete employment data ranges from 78 percent in the first quarter after random assignment to 91 percent in the sixth quarter after random assignment. A small number of individuals who reported having one to three jobs but did not provide answers to questions on employment duration or earnings are also not counted as having complete information. The proportion of respondents with complete information during the period over which we calculate annual earnings (months 7 to 18 after random assignment) ranges from 86.5 to 91 percent.

To test for any effects of the loss of these data on program impacts, we recalculated differences and reestimated the multivariate models using only the sample of those who reported having zero to three jobs, and hence have no missing job data. There are no changes in the outcome measures for which we observe statistically significant differences between Bridges participants and the control group. We further note that there is also no statistically significant difference in the proportion of Bridges participants and those in the control group who had four or more jobs since the date of random assignment.

Bridges to Work Program Content Change

In February 1998, P/PV held meetings with Bridges program staff at each site in which we encouraged them to make changes to their recruitment and orientation processes. The recommended design changes involved adding soft skills exercises to orientation sessions, both pre- and post-random assignment, and using multiple recruiting methods rather than relying solely on referrals from other employment and training agencies. We also encouraged sites to provide job retention services to a greater extent than originally anticipated.

We tested for differences in outcomes among those who entered Bridges after this program change using a Chow test for equivalence of regression coefficients, and identified several models in which the results suggested that the set of coefficients differed

by whether participants entered before or after the aforementioned program change. The models with overall differences in coefficients included the hourly wage and availability of health insurance in the main job following random assignment, and earnings in months 7 to 18 following random assignment. For more information on the Chow test, see Chow (1960) and Kennedy (1998). We reestimated the entire set of models by restricting the sample to those who entered the program after the program change and found no difference in the number of statistically significant relationships between receiving Bridges services and the outcome variables. We also estimated models with an additional explanatory variable to control for pre- or post-program change status and similarly found no additional statistically significant relationships.

Multivariate Analyses of the Bridges to Work Impacts

In addition to the comparison of group means, we use a variety of multivariate models to estimate the impacts of Bridges to Work and to provide greater detail on the predictors of the outcomes of greatest interest to this analysis. This section details the specifications used in these multivariate analyses.

We estimate the effect of participating in Bridges to Work on a variety of labor market and other outcomes using a group of explanatory variables that control for the effects of demographic characteristics, education, labor market experience, barriers to employment and program location. By explicitly controlling for the observable factors that we hypothesize will affect a given outcome, we attempt to remove the effect of any preprogram differences between those in the Bridges and control groups that remained after random assignment and are related to our outcome measures. We compared characteristics of participants with those of the control group at baseline and found no statistically significant differences among variables that we viewed as being of key importance, including race, age, marital status and work experience as measured by recent work or full-time work experience of more than one year. Participants had a greater, and statistically significant, likelihood of having other adults in their household and, on average, had fewer children. We estimated models with controls for these variables and found no difference in the statistical significance of the relationship between participating in Bridges and program outcome measures. We also turn to the estimated relationship between the set of control variables and a given dependent variable when considering the ways in which individual characteristics aside from participation in the Bridges program predict the outcomes of interest.

In particular, all models include the following explanatory variables, measured prior to the date of random assignment unless otherwise noted: age; gender; race, measured by whether the participant was African American or not; education, measured by whether the participant had no high school diploma or GED, was a high school graduate or held an advanced degree including any beyond an associate's degree; marital status; the length of the participant's longest full-time job; whether the participant worked in the previous six months; was ever convicted of a crime; held a valid driver's license; had

a physical, mental or other health condition that limited the kind or amount of work that could be done; lived with his or her own child under the age of six; had a child with a physical, emotional or mental problem that required special medicine or equipment, or made it difficult to get to school or play games; had a child under the age of 18 living in the household who was not in preschool, day care or Head Start; program site location; and time elapsed between the baseline and follow-up interviews.

In general, our models take the following form

(1) $Y_f = \alpha + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 X + \varepsilon$

Where:

- Y_f = The post-program value of the outcome variable observed at the time of the follow-up survey;
- α; β = coefficients;
- T = a dummy variable indicating whether the individual received Bridges services;
- X = a vector of explanatory variables; and
- ε = a stochastic disturbance term with a mean of zero and a constant variance.

Again, this specification allows us to explicitly control for the effect of a variety of variables while estimating the impact of participating in Bridges, given by β_1 above.

In certain models, we include the baseline value of the outcome variable in order to estimate the change, or value added, associated with participating in Bridges. These models are a simple modification of equation (1):

(2) $Y_f = \alpha + \beta_1 Y_b + \beta_2 T + \beta_3 X + \varepsilon$

Where:

- Y_b = The pre-program value of the outcome variable observed at the time of the baseline survey.

Model (2) might be thought of as similar to a specification using the calculated change in the outcome measure as the dependent variable. Equation (2) is preferable to such a form as it does not require the assumption that the preprogram value of the outcome variable and the post-program change are perfectly related. If this assumption holds, estimates made using equation (2) will be identical to those from an equation with change scores as the dependent variable.

We also use a series of interaction terms to estimate the relationship between participating in Bridges and being part of a particular subgroup or receiving services at a given site. In these cases, we modify equation (1) as follows:

(3) $Y_f = \alpha + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 X + \beta_3 G_1 + \beta_4(T * G_1) + \varepsilon$

(4) $Y_f = \alpha + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 X + \beta_3 S_1 + \beta_4(T * S_1) + \varepsilon$

Where:

G_1	=	a dummy variable representing a particular subgroup;
$T * G_1$	=	a dummy variable equal to one for participants of a particular subgroup, zero otherwise;
Sn	=	site-specific dummy variables; and
T * Sn	=	a dummy variable equal to one for participants at a particular site, zero otherwise.

We estimate models for the following subgroups: individuals whose race is other than African American; participants who had ever received TANF prior to starting the program; those who had no high school diploma or GED; participants who lived with one of their children who is under the age of six; and those who worked at some point in the six months before the date of random assignment.

In all cases, we model continuous outcome variables using OLS regression, and use logit models, a nonlinear maximum likelihood estimation technique, for dichotomous dependent variables.

Our principal interest in this evaluation is to assess the effect, if any, of participating in Bridges to Work on the outcomes that we measure. In the context of the multivariate models, we seek to identify relationships between the receipt of services and the outcomes, the sign and magnitude of which are represented by β_1, that statistically differ from zero. Throughout this report, differences that are statistically significant at the 10 percent level are identified as such.

Appendix B: Outcomes By Site and Subgroup

Appendix Table B1: Employment Patterns By Site

	Baltimore			Denver		
	Bridges (n=281)	Controls (n=276)	Impact	Bridges (n=238)	Controls (n=228)	Impact
Ever employed in the 18 months post-RA	95.4%	93.1%	2.3%	93.3%	91.2%	2.1%
Employed in the 1st quarter post-RA	66.9%	58.0%	8.9%**	60.5%	57.5%	3.0%
Employed in the 2nd quarter post-RA	74.4%	70.3%	4.1%	65.6%	64.5%	1.1%
Employed in the 3rd quarter post-RA	74.7%	73.6%	1.1%	71.4%	70.2%	1.2%
Employed in the 4th quarter post-RA	76.5%	75.7%	0.8%	74.8%	73.3%	1.5%
Employed in the 5th quarter post-RA	77.9%	80.4%	–2.5%	79.0%	78.5%	0.5%
Employed in the 6th quarter post-RA	82.2%	84.8%	–2.6%	81.1%	81.6%	–0.5%
Months employed in the 18 months post-RA	12.7	12.3	0.5	11.9	11.8	0.0
Employed in 14 of the 18 months post-RA	58.4%	52.5%	5.9%	48.7%	51.8%	–3.1%
Suburban job in the 18 months post-RA	60.1%	41.7%	18.5%***	58.4%	44.7%	13.7%

	Milwaukee			St. Louis		
	Bridges (n=201)	Controls (n=178)	Impact	Bridges (n=197)	Controls (n=214)	Impact
Ever employed in the 18 months post-RA	91.0%	87.6%	3.4%	92.9%	93.5%	–0.6%
Employed in the 1st quarter post-RA	56.7%	55.1%	1.6%	51.8%	63.1%	–11.3%**
Employed in the 2nd quarter post-RA	64.7%	63.5%	1.2%	62.9%	72.0%	–9.1%*
Employed in the 3rd quarter post-RA	69.2%	65.7%	3.5%	70.1%	73.8%	–3.7%
Employed in the 4th quarter post-RA	70.7%	66.9%	3.8%	76.1%	78.5%	–2.4%
Employed in the 5th quarter post-RA	75.6%	71.9%	3.7%	80.7%	82.2%	–1.5%
Employed in the 6th quarter post-RA	82.1%	70.2%	11.9%***	82.7%	84.6%	–1.9%
Months employed in the 18 months post-RA	11.6	10.7	0.9	11.7	12.5	–0.8
Employed in 14 of the 18 months post-RA	47.3%	44.9%	2.4%	45.2%	53.7%	–8.5%*
Suburban job in the 18 months post-RA	54.7%	47.2%	7.5%	64.5%	51.9%	12.6%***

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B2: Earnings By Site

	Baltimore			Denver		
	Bridges (n=281)	Controls (n=276)	Impact	Bridges (n=238)	Controls (n=228)	Impact
Earnings in the 1st quarter post-RA	$2,151	$1,724	$428**	$2,286	$1,933	$353
Earnings in the 2nd quarter post-RA	$2,491	$2,185	$306	$2,591	$2,416	$175
Earnings in the 3rd quarter post-RA	$2,690	$2,489	$201	$2,680	$2,720	–$ 40
Earnings in the 4th quarter post-RA	$2,825	$2,599	$226	$2,876	$2,883	–$ 7
Earnings in the 5th quarter post-RA	$2,882	$2,862	$ 20	$3,049	$2,934	$115
Earnings in the 6th quarter post-RA	$2,904	$2,897	$ 8	$3,186	$3,266	–$ 80
Annual earnings in months 7 through 18 post-RA	$11,710	$11,246	$464	$12,172	$12,218	–$ 45

	Milwaukee			St. Louis		
	Bridges (n=201)	Controls (n=178)	Impact	Bridges (n=197)	Controls (n=214)	Impact
Earnings in the 1st quarter post-RA	$1,920	$1,645	$275	$1,207	$1,490	–$284
Earnings in the 2nd quarter post-RA	$2,114	$1,965	$149	$1,620	$2,012	–$392*
Earnings in the 3rd quarter post-RA	$2,312	$2,254	$ 59	$2,018	$2,014	$ 4
Earnings in the 4th quarter post-RA	$2,510	$2,316	$193	$2,303	$2,261	$ 41
Earnings in the 5th quarter post-RA	$2,660	$2,439	$221	$2,475	$2,612	–$137
Earnings in the 6th quarter post-RA	$2,651	$2,277	$374	$2,525	$2,654	–$129
Annual earnings in months 7 through 18 post-RA	$10,459	$9,580	$879	$9,589	$9,860	–$271

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B3:
Characteristics of the Main Job Post-Random Assignment By Site

	Baltimore			Denver		
	Bridges (n=268)	Controls (n=257)	Impact	Bridges (n=222)	Controls (n=208)	Impact
Average hourly wage	$7.98	$8.32	–$0.33	$9.12	$9.50	–$0.38
Hourly wage greater than $8	39.6%	45.2%	–5.5%	65.1%	66.0%	–0.9%
Worked full-time	79.9%	79.8%	0.1%	84.2%	79.8%	4.4%
Average commute (minutes)	40.2	37.5	2.8	35.9	33.6	2.2
Health insurance available	59.6%	55.1%	4.5%	72.9%	60.6%	12.3%***
Sick leave available	50.2%	46.3%	3.9%	54.9%	48.5%	6.4%
Child-care assistance available	12.3%	11.9%	0.4%	18.0%	8.6%	9.4%**

	Milwaukee			St. Louis		
	Bridges (n=183)	Controls (n=156)	Impact	Bridges (n=183)	Controls (n=200)	Impact
Average hourly wage	$8.11	$8.30	–$0.20	$8.25	$7.72	$0.53
Hourly wage greater than $8	44.3%	44.7%	–0.4%	47.7%	39.6%	8.1%
Worked full-time	80.9%	85.3%	–4.4%	76.5%	75.5%	1.0%
Average commute (minutes)	35.7	34.8	0.9	44.4	35.6	8.8
Health insurance available	63.9%	58.4%	5.5%	64.8%	51.5%	13.3%***
Sick leave available	40.7%	37.8%	2.8%	46.6%	36.3%	10.3%**
Child-care assistance available	9.7%	11.9%	–2.2%	12.1%	8.6%	3.5%

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B4:
Receipt of Government Benefits, Household Income and Poverty Status By Site

	Baltimore			Denver		
	Bridges (n=281)	Controls (n=276)	Impact	Bridges (n=238)	Controls (n=228)	Impact
Receipt of government assistance in the month before the follow-up survey						
AFDC/TANF	12.0%	13.4%	–1.4%	6.3%	4.4%	1.9%
Food stamps	18.5%	23.0%	–4.5%	17.3%	18.1%	–0.8%
Medicaid	18.9%	21.1%	–2.2%	21.5%	24.1%	–2.6%
Housing assistance	46.6%	45.3%	1.3%	43.7%	38.2%	5.5%
Household income in the month before the follow-up survey						
Any income from work	84.5%	82.3%	2.2%	82.9%	81.1%	1.9%
Total income in previous month	$1,456	$1,452	$4	$1,914	$1,565	$349
Income less than the poverty threshold	50.4%	51.8%	–1.5%	43.8%	46.2%	–2.4%
Deviant behavior post-random assignment						
Convicted of a crime	5.0%	3.3%	1.7%	9.7%	10.1%	–0.4%
Used drugs	3.9%	4.4%	–0.5%	10.9%	7.1%	3.8%

	Milwaukee			St. Louis		
	Bridges (n=201)	Controls (n=178)	Impact	Bridges (n=197)	Controls (n=214)	Impact
Receipt of government assistance in the month before the follow-up survey						
AFDC/TANF	6.2%	4.7%	1.5%	16.6%	15.8%	0.8%
Food stamps	23.7%	23.6%	0.2%	28.2%	28.7%	–0.5%
Medicaid	18.8%	15.3%	3.5%	29.1%	31.9%	–2.8%
Housing assistance	35.3%	30.9%	4.4%	31.5%	32.2%	–0.8%
Household income in the month before the follow-up survey						
Any income from work	78.6%	73.1%	5.5%	77.8%	74.4%	3.4%
Total income in previous month	$1,400	$1,164	$236*	$1,418	$1,258	$160
Income less than the poverty threshold	52.3%	62.3%	–10.0%*	53.1%	57.6%	–4.6%
Deviant behavior post-random assignment						
Convicted of a crime	12.0%	12.9%	–0.9%	5.1%	1.4%	3.7%**
Used drugs	7.0%	9.0%	–2.1%	4.1%	6.1%	–2.1%

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B5: Residential Behavior and Attitudes By Site

	Baltimore			Denver		
	Bridges (n=281)	Controls (n=276)	Impact	Bridges (n=238)	Controls (n=228)	Impact
Number of moves since RA	0.7	0.8	–0.1	1.2	1.2	0.0
Ever lived in the suburbs since RA	7.5%	8.0%	–0.5%	21.9%	25.4%	–3.5%
Would consider moving in the next 18 months	63.0%	67.7%	–4.6%	64.2%	71.5%	–7.3%*
Would consider moving to the suburbs	33.7%	30.4%	3.3%	17.0%	17.2%	–0.2%
Went to the suburbs for purposes unrelated to work	63.0%	58.4%	4.6%	52.2%	49.7%	2.5%
Feel not very or not at all safe in neighborhood	11.7%	12.6%	–0.9%	5.1%	7.5%	–2.4%
Rate housing as being in fair/poor condition	32.1%	28.8%	3.3%	23.8%	33.1%	–9.2%

	Milwaukee			St. Louis		
	Bridges (n=201)	Controls (n=178)	Impact	Bridges (n=197)	Controls (n=214)	Impact
Number of moves since RA	1.2	1.3	–0.1	0.9	0.9	0.0
Ever lived in the suburbs since RA	6.5%	6.2%	0.3%	13.2%	16.4%	–3.2%
Would consider moving in the next 18 months	74.9%	80.5%	–5.6%	74.6%	73.9%	0.7%
Would consider moving to the suburbs	18.9%	16.6%	2.3%	18.9%	16.6%	2.3%
Went to the suburbs for purposes unrelated to work	41.1%	46.1%	–5.1%	68.2%	58.1%	10.1%**
Feel not very or not at all safe in neighborhood	9.7%	14.7%	–5.0%	9.1%	9.8%	–0.7%
Rate housing as being in fair/poor condition	35.9%	36.4%	–0.6%	32.9%	39.5%	–6.6%

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B6: Employment Patterns By Subgroup

	Current AFDC/TANF Recipient at Random Assignment			Lives with a Child Under Age 6		
	Bridges (n=126)	Controls (n=147)	Impact	Bridges (n=385)	Controls (n=391)	Impact
Ever employed in the 18 months post-RA	91.3%	93.9%	–2.6%	92.8%	94.4%	–1.6%
Employed in the 1st quarter post-RA	59.5%	53.7%	5.8%	54.7%	61.4%	–6.7%
Employed in the 2nd quarter post-RA	72.2%	65.3%	6.9%	63.7%	70.7%	–7.0%
Employed in the 3rd quarter post-RA	74.6%	69.4%	5.2%	70.9%	77.7%	–6.8%
Employed in the 4th quarter post-RA	74.6%	71.4%	3.2%	76.2%	76.3%	–0.1%
Employed in the 5th quarter post-RA	71.4%	75.5%	–4.1%	76.7%	80.9%	–4.3%
Employed in the 6th quarter post-RA	79.4%	83.0%	–3.6%	83.9%	84.2%	–0.3%
Months employed in the 18 months post-RA	12.0	11.3	0.7	13.1	12.3	0.8
Employed in 14 of the 18 months post-RA	50.0%	45.6%	4.4%	46.2%	53.5%	–7.3%
Suburban job in the 18 months post-RA	58.7%	41.5%	17.2%***	56.1%	46.1%	10.0%**

	Worked in 6 Months Prior to Random Assignment			No HS Diploma or GED		
	Bridges (n=689)	Controls (n=691)	Impact	Bridges (n=145)	Controls (n=144)	Impact
Ever employed in the 18 months post-RA	94.5%	92.2%	2.3%*	88.3%	88.2%	0.1%
Employed in the 1st quarter post-RA	62.7%	58.2%	4.5%*	55.2%	52.1%	3.1%
Employed in the 2nd quarter post-RA	71.4%	67.2%	4.3%*	64.1%	60.4%	3.7%
Employed in the 3rd quarter post-RA	74.3%	70.9%	3.4%	69.0%	64.6%	4.4%
Employed in the 4th quarter post-RA	76.2%	75.0%	1.2%	70.3%	67.4%	2.9%
Employed in the 5th quarter post-RA	80.3%	80.2%	0.1%	71.7%	68.8%	2.9%
Employed in the 6th quarter post-RA	83.3%	82.3%	1.0%	75.9%	72.9%	2.9%
Months employed in the 18 months post-RA	12.5	12.0	0.5	11.6	10.5	1.1
Employed in 14 of the 18 months post-RA	53.7%	52.4%	1.3%	46.9%	41.7%	5.2%
Suburban job in the 18 months post-RA	60.2%	47.0%	13.2%***	51.7%	44.4%	7.3%

	African American			Received TANF in Month Prior to BtW or Lives with Children Only		
	(n=788)	(n=788)		(n=275)	(n=304)	
Ever employed in the 18 months post-RA	93.2%	91.4%	1.8%	91.3%	92.1%	–0.8%
Employed in the 1st quarter post-RA	58.9%	58.1%	0.8%	56.0%	57.9%	–1.9%
Employed in the 2nd quarter post-RA	66.4%	68.0%	–1.6%	66.9%	67.1%	–0.2%
Employed in the 3rd quarter post-RA	70.8%	70.9%	–0.1%	70.9%	70.1%	0.8%
Employed in the 4th quarter post-RA	74.8%	73.5%	1.3%	72.7%	72.7%	0.0%
Employed in the 5th quarter post-RA	78.4%	78.0%	0.4%	76.4%	78.3%	–1.9%
Employed in the 6th quarter post-RA	82.4%	80.5%	1.9%	81.1%	81.6%	–0.5%
Months employed in the 18 months post-RA	12.0	11.9	0.2	11.8	11.7	0.1
Employed in 14 of the 18 months post-RA	50.4%	50.6%	–0.2%	48.7%	50.3%	–1.6%
Suburban job in the 18 months post-RA	60.0%	46.3%	13.8%***	59.3%	46.7%	12.6%***

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B7: Earnings By Subgroup

	Current AFDC/TANF Recipient at Random Assignment			Lives with a Child Under Age 6		
	Bridges (n=126)	Controls (n=147)	Impact	Bridges (n=385)	Controls (n=391)	Impact
Earnings in the 1st quarter post-RA	$1,654	$1,387	$268	$1,923	$1,697	$226
Earnings in the 2nd quarter post-RA	$2,014	$1,830	$184	$2,205	$2,247	–$42
Earnings in the 3rd quarter post-RA	$2,266	$1,877	$388	$2,513	$2,445	$67
Earnings in the 4th quarter post-RA	$2,213	$1,972	$241	$2,837	$2,578	$259
Earnings in the 5th quarter post-RA	$2,391	$2,221	$170	$2,927	$2,704	$224
Earnings in the 6th quarter post-RA	$2,704	$2,323	$382	$3,072	$2,817	$256
Annual earnings in months 7 through 18 post-RA	$9,883	$8,792	$1,090	$11,671	$11,050	$621

	Worked in 6 Months Prior to Random Assignment			No HS Diploma or GED		
	Bridges (n=689)	Controls (n=691)	Impact	Bridges (n=145)	Controls (n=144)	Impact
Earnings in the 1st quarter post-RA	$2,118	$1,728	$390***	$1,705	$1,634	$71
Earnings in the 2nd quarter post-RA	$2,411	$2,191	$221	$1,943	$1,857	$86
Earnings in the 3rd quarter post-RA	$2,603	$2,417	$186	$2,063	$1,939	$124
Earnings in the 4th quarter post-RA	$2,808	$2,586	$222	$2,214	$2,034	$181
Earnings in the 5th quarter post-RA	$2,951	$2,832	$119	$2,316	$2,123	$193
Earnings in the 6th quarter post-RA	$2,991	$2,952	$39	$2,302	$2,196	$106
Annual earnings in months 7 through 18 post-RA	$11,737	$11,130	$607	$9,176	$8,585	$591

	African American			Received TANF in Month Prior to BtW or Lives with Children Only		
	Bridges (n=788)	Controls (n=788)	Impact	Bridges (n=275)	Controls (n=304)	Impact
Earnings in the 1st quarter post-RA	$1,896	$1,670	$226*	$1,712	$1,558	$154
Earnings in the 2nd quarter post-RA	$2,203	$2,114	$90	$1,990	$1,907	$83
Earnings in the 3rd quarter post-RA	$2,425	$2,323	$102	$2,233	$2,051	$182
Earnings in the 4th quarter post-RA	$2,633	$2,449	$184	$2,458	$2,130	$328*
Earnings in the 5th quarter post-RA	$2,775	$2,643	$132	$2,667	$2,283	$384*
Earnings in the 6th quarter post-RA	$2,825	$2,692	$133	$2,802	$2,391	$411**
Annual earnings in months 7 through 18 post-RA	$11,026	$10,453	$573	$10,476	$9,185	$1,291*

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B8:
Characteristics of the Main Job Post-Random Assignment By Subgroup

	Current AFDC/TANF Recipient at Random Assignment			Lives with a Child Under Age 6		
	Bridges (n=115)	Controls (n=138)	Impact	Bridges (n=356)	Controls (n=360)	Impact
Average hourly wage	$8.75	$7.48	$1.27***	$8.56	$8.29	$0.27
Hourly wage greater than $8	47.7%	37.6%	10.1%	52.3%	46.7%	5.6%
Worked full-time	78.3%	81.2%	–2.9%	80.7%	79.8%	0.9%
Average commute (minutes)	38.0	36.1	1.9**	35.3	34.3	1.0
Health insurance available	60.0%	50.8%	9.3%	67.2%	59.8%	7.4%
Sick leave available	54.5%	43.2%	11.3%*	55.7%	48.0%	7.7%
Child-care assistance available	15.9%	7.8%	8.2%**	14.6%	9.2%	5.4%*

	Worked in 6 Months Prior to Random Assignment			No HS Diploma or GED		
	Bridges (n=651)	Controls (n=637)	Impact	Bridges (n=128)	Controls (n=127)	Impact
Average hourly wage	$8.46	$8.56	–$0.11	$7.84	$8.12	–$0.28
Hourly wage greater than $8	49.4%	50.7%	–1.3%	37.4%	39.3%	–1.9%
Worked full-time	82.0%	80.9%	1.2%	76.6%	78.0%	–1.4%
Average commute (minutes)	37.6	36.3	1.3	29.2	36.7	–7.4**
Health insurance available	66.3%	56.7%	9.5%***	58.7%	52.4%	6.3%
Sick leave available	49.7%	43.5%	6.2%**	33.1%	42.0%	–9.0%
Child-care assistance available	13.7%	10.6%	3.1%*	11.0%	6.7%	4.3%

	African American			Received TANF in Month Prior to BtW or Lives with Children Only		
	Bridges (n=734)	Controls (n=697)	Impact	Bridges (n=251)	Controls (n=280)	Impact
Average hourly wage	$8.32	$8.38	–$0.07	$8.50	$7.76	$0.74**
Hourly wage greater than $8	48.1%	47.8%	0.3%	50.0%	41.3%	8.7%*
Worked full-time	80.8%	78.9%	1.9%	82.5%	80.0%	2.5%
Average commute (minutes)	39.7	36.0	3.6*	36.7	36.6	0.1
Health insurance available	64.4%	55.1%	9.3%***	63.6%	53.1%	10.5%**
Sick leave available	48.7%	42.6%	6.1%**	53.3%	42.2%	11.1%**
Child-care assistance available	12.9%	10.7%	2.2%	13.0%	7.9%	5.1%*

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B9: Receipt of Government Benefits, Household Income and Poverty Status By Subgroup

	Current AFDC/TANF Recipient at Random Assignment			Lives with a Child Under Age 6		
	Bridges (n=126)	Controls (n=147)	Impact	Bridges (n=385)	Controls (n=391)	Impact
Receipt of government assistance in the month before the follow-up survey						
AFDC/TANF	28.0%	28.3%	–0.3%	13.1%	20.3%	–7.2%**
Food stamps	44.0%	51.7%	–7.7%	31.7%	39.6%	–8.0%*
Medicaid	51.2%	46.2%	5.1%	37.0%	40.5%	–3.5%
Housing assistance	56.4%	50.3%	6.0%	44.8%	41.9%	3.0%
Household income in the month before the follow-up survey						
Any income from work	74.2%	69.9%	4.3%	80.8%	76.7%	4.1%
Total income in previous month	$1,744	$1,225	$519	$1,810	$1,391	$419
Income less than the poverty threshold	67.2%	70.3%	–3.1%	53.6%	65.7%	–12.1%**
Deviant behavior post-random assignment						
Convicted of a crime	2.4%	4.1%	–1.7%	5.8%	5.6%	0.2%
Used drugs	2.4%	2.7%	–0.4%	4.5%	5.6%	–1.1%

	Worked in 6 Months Prior to Random Assignment			No HS Diploma or GED		
	Bridges (n=689)	Controls (n=691)	Impact	Bridges (n=145)	Controls (n=144)	Impact
Receipt of government assistance in the month before the follow-up survey						
AFDC/TANF	7.8%	8.7%	–0.9%	12.1%	12.9%	–0.7%
Food stamps	17.4%	21.1%	–3.7%*	32.4%	27.0%	5.4%
Medicaid	19.3%	22.5%	–3.2%	29.7%	23.0%	6.7%
Housing assistance	38.5%	35.5%	3.0%	42.1%	41.0%	1.1%
Household income in the month before the follow-up survey						
Any income from work	84.5%	80.5%	4.0%	71.8%	68.6%	3.3%
Total income in previous month	$1,507	$1,409	$98	$1,231	$1,196	$34
Income less than the poverty threshold	47.1%	51.0%	–3.9%	63.6%	60.3%	3.4%
Deviant behavior post-random assignment						
Convicted of a crime	8.4%	6.4%	2.1%	11.7%	12.6%	–0.9%
Used drugs	7.1%	6.3%	0.8%	9.7%	6.3%	3.3%

	African American			Received TANF in Month Prior to BtW or Lives with Children Only		
	Bridges (n=788)	Controls (n=788)	Impact	Bridges (n=275)	Controls (n=304)	Impact
Receipt of government assistance in the month before the follow-up survey						
AFDC/TANF	10.5%	10.8%	–0.2%	19.9%	22.0%	–2.1%
Food stamps	21.2%	24.9%	–3.6%*	33.6%	41.1%	–6.5%*
Medicaid	21.3%	23.4%	–2.1%	36.1%	39.3%	–3.2%
Housing assistance	41.1%	37.9%	3.2%	49.8%	44.1%	–5.8%
Household income in the month before the follow-up survey						
Any income from work	81.4%	78.6%	2.8%	80.4%	73.6%	6.8%*
Total income in previous month	$1,539	$1,333	$206**	$1,409	$1,294	$115
Income less than the poverty threshold	50.0%	55.3%	–5.3%**	59.0%	63.3%	–4.3%
Deviant behavior post-random assignment						
Convicted of a crime	7.5%	5.4%	2.1%*	4.7%	4.6%	0.1%
Used drugs	6.1%	5.7%	0.4%	2.9%	5.0%	2.1%

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the ** 5-percent level, * 10-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Appendix Table B10: Residential Behavior and Attitudes By Subgroup

	Current AFDC/TANF Recipient at Random Assignment			Lives with a Child Under Age 6		
	Bridges (n=126)	Controls (n=147)	Impact	Bridges (n=385)	Controls (n=391)	Impact
Number of moves since RA	0.9	0.9	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
Ever lived in the suburbs since RA	13.5%	6.1%	7.4%**	12.6%	10.2%	2.3%
Would consider moving in the next 18 months	76.2%	71.2%	5.0%	68.2%	72.9%	–4.7%
Would consider moving to the suburbs	29.0%	23.5%	5.5%	23.8%	27.3%	–3.5%
Went to the suburbs for purposes unrelated to work	54.5%	52.2%	2.3%	52.2%	52.3%	–0.1%
Feel not very or not at all safe in neighborhood	14.2%	15.0%	–0.8%	11.7%	12.6%	–1.0%
Rate housing as being in fair/poor condition	37.3%	42.2%	–4.9%	31.5%	38.9%	–7.3%

	Worked in 6 Months Prior to Random Assignment			No HS Diploma or GED		
	Bridges (n=689)	Controls (n=691)	Impact	Bridges (n=145)	Controls (n=144)	Impact
Number of moves since RA	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.1	1.2	–0.1
Ever lived in the suburbs since RA	12.0%	15.0%	–3%	12.4%	12.5%	–0.1%
Would consider moving in the next 18 months	67.6%	73.0%	–5.4%***	71.0%	71.2%	–0.2%
Would consider moving to the suburbs	25.4%	24.4%	1.0%	19.6%	22.7%	–3.1%
Went to the suburbs for purposes unrelated to work	55.7%	54.3%	1.4%	42.1%	42.9%	–0.8%
Feel not very or not at all safe in neighborhood	8.3%	10.0%	–1.7%	13.3%	16.0%	–2.7%
Rate housing as being in fair/poor condition	30.0%	33.1%	–3.1%	36.4%	38.5%	–2.1%

	African American			Received TANF in Month Prior to BtW or Lives with Children Only		
	Bridges (n=788)	Controls (n=788)	Impact	Bridges (n=275)	Controls (n=304)	Impact
Number of moves since RA	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
Ever lived in the suburbs since RA	11.2%	13.6%	–2.4%	13.5%	11.2%	2.3%
Would consider moving in the next 18 months	68.6%	72.1%	–3.5%	75.2%	75.2%	0.0%
Would consider moving to the suburbs	26.2%	27.2%	–1.0%	27.2%	23.6%	3.6%
Went to the suburbs for purposes unrelated to work	57.5%	53.7%	3.8%	50.7%	54.6%	–4.1%
Feel not very or not at all safe in neighborhood	8.3%	10.0%	–1.7%	13.2%	14.2%	–1.0%
Rate housing as being in fair/poor condition	30.0%	33.1%	–3.1%	38.6%	36.5%	2.1%

*Note: Statistical significance is indicated at the *** 1-percent level, ** 5-percent level.*
Source: P/PV analysis of Bridges baseline and follow-up survey data.

Public/Private Ventures
2000 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: (215) 557-4400
Fax: (215) 557-4469

New York Office
The Chanin Building
122 East 42nd Street, 42nd Floor
New York, NY 10168
Tel: (212) 822-2400
Fax: (212) 949-0439

California Office
Lake Merritt Plaza, Suite 1550
1999 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (510) 273-4600
Fax: (510) 273-4619

http://www.ppv.org

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